



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

IMPRISONED IN A SPANISH CONVENT

E. C. Grenville Murray



ILLUSTRATED





NEW RUSSIAN REALISTIC NOVEL.

In crown 8vo, 460 pages, 6s.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.

By FEDOR DOSTOIEFFSKY. *Translated with Madame Dostoeffsky's sanction.*

"The reader knows the personages—strange, grotesque, terrible personages they are—more intimately than if he had been years with them in the flesh. He is constrained to live their lives, to suffer their tortures, to scheme and resist with them, exult with them, weep and laugh and despair with them; he breathes the very breath of their nostrils, and with the madness that comes upon them he is afflicted even as they. This sounds extravagant praise, no doubt; but only to those who have not read the volume. To those who have, we are sure that it will appear rather under the mark than otherwise."—*Athenæum*.

The story of "His Royal Highness's Love Affair" in the present volume has been reprinted from *Harper's Magazine* by the courteous permission of the proprietors.







"He burst into such a fury of invective as I had never heard from him before, cursing me as the incarnation of all that was selfish and base."

Page 12.

THE HISTORY OF
THE
IN A SPANISH ROMANCE

BY EDWARD LEE

WITH NOTES

BY L. C. BURTON, Esq.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

REVISED
WITH NOTES BY

ST. JOHN LEE

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY CHARLES DENT & CO., 25, ABchurch Lane, E.C. 4.

• • •

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

.

IMPRISONED IN A SPANISH CONVENT:

AN ENGLISH GIRL'S EXPERIENCES

WITH OTHER NARRATIVES AND TALES.

BY E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY,
AUTHOR OF "UNDER THE LENS," "SIDE LIGHTS ON ENGLISH SOCIETY," ETC.

Illustrated
WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
VIZETELLY & CO., 42, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

1886.

—

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
IMPRISONED IN A SPANISH CONVENT	1
A POOR DOCTOR'S TEMPTATION	122
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S LOVE AFFAIR	149
IN A PARISIAN GAOL: A HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE	191
A PLUM-PUDDING FROM WINDSOR CASTLE	229
RETIRED FROM BUSINESS	255
THE TREASON OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD	269
HIS MAJESTY'S BARBER	293
DOWB'S COXCOMBERY	310
M.P. IN SPITE OF HIMSELF	333
DR. OLIBRIUS'S SNAKE RING	342
PRINCE AND JEW	359
THE HEADSMAN OF FRIESPIEL	389
PRINCE MORELVINE'S EXPIATION	400
CHICKBOROUGH'S SCARE	410
A TALE OF LOTTERY WINNINGS	421



ADA.

IMPRISONED IN A SPANISH CONVENT.

CHAPTER I.

My father rejects a proposal for my hand.—His harsh treatment of me.—

Having business in Spain, he takes me with him and treacherously induces me to sojourn in a convent near Seville.

WHEN Henry Avenant asked my father's and stepmother's sanction to the offer of marriage which he had made to me, I felt quite certain that he would obtain it. So sure was I that when Harry smiled to me in that bright way of his, just as

he was leaving me to enter my father's study, I smiled back with my whole heart, feeling too happy to imagine that any misfortune was impending over me. The next half-hour of delightful anticipation was one of the sweetest in my life, though, looking back upon it by the light of all that occurred subsequently, it has often seemed to me so inexpressibly full of anguish. Yet I am sure I must have been happy, for I remember I stood singing softly at the window as I did not sing again for years afterwards.

Harry came out from my father's study, and passed with slow steps through the hall, my father conducting him, but he did not re-enter the drawing-room. He left the house, and walked away without once looking back. I could scarcely believe my eyes. What—not a look, not a sign? What could have happened? Every girl will understand the sickening sensation of fear and agony that came over me as I stood rooted to my place near the window, gazing after Harry till he was out of sight. Oh, if we girls had but the liberty of men! I could have taken up my hat and run out to ask Harry why he was going away like that. Had our positions been reversed he certainly would have run after me, and would have forced me to tell him the truth; and then there would have been no misunderstandings, and no human being could have come between us. But I had to do as girls do. I was deadly pale, and sank on a chair, chilled all through by the shadow of the calamity that was about to fall on my life.

My father and stepmother soon came in together. My

mother (as I always called her) had for some time past been in delicate health, and, being dependent upon me for a good deal of attendance, had become particularly intimate and affectionate with me; but she was a person of weak will, entirely subject to my father, who was a man of overbearing temper, and I guessed that on the present occasion she had only been brought in to give the semblance of her approbation to whatever things my father chose to say. I was the only child by my father's first marriage, and he had never shown me the affection which he bore to his six children by the second marriage. There had been an estrangement, a coldness, a something between us that had made him avoid ever being alone with me when he could help it; and I should, no doubt, have spent an unhappy childhood had I not been at school most of the time. Since my return home my father's coldness had been more marked than ever, but it had not amounted to unkindness, and, indeed, though often so passionate towards his wife and the children whom he loved, he had never spoken harshly to me until this day, when he told me that he would never consent to my becoming Henry Avenant's wife.

"This man—this curate—has come to propose for your hand, Ada," he said, with an anger he could hardly control. "I am surprised and shocked that you should have given him any encouragement. He says he has some private means besides his stipend, and hopes soon to get a living, but I am not bound to take his word for it. Besides, I altogether object to the match, and desire you distinctly to under-

stand that so long as you are under my authority you shall not marry him."

I could not help reflecting in my misery that as I was only nineteen years old, I should be free to act for myself in two years ; but, as though divining my thoughts, my father said, with rising anger :

"Now, am I to understand that you will unreservedly submit yourself to my wishes in this matter ?"

"I cannot marry without your consent," I faltered, trembling at the fury with which he glared at me. My father was a tall, stout man, with dark eyes ; and I almost thought he was going to strike me.

"You shall not have my consent if I live to be a hundred !" he exclaimed, giving one of the chairs such a push that it fell down ; "and, what is more, if you were ten years older than you are I should do my utmost to thwart the match. I suppose this philandering with curates comes from your attending the singing class, Sunday schools, and other such rubbish ; but I will put a stop to it. I am going out now to complain to Avenant's rector ; and as for you, you will not leave the house till I have given you my permission. Do you hear ?"

His face had become quite white with rage, and, after collecting himself for a moment, he burst into such a fury of invective as I had never heard from him before, upbraiding me for my duplicity, my hard-heartedness, my coldness towards him (as if it had been my fault), and cursing me as the incarnation of all that was selfish and base. Upon his

wife endeavouring to comfort me in my distress, he diverted his wrath upon her, calling her a weak fool, and saying that she had never had a care to make his children right-minded or dutiful. The poor woman was so much affected, that when my father strode out I took her sobbing in my arms, and tried to comfort her. We cried together, and as soon as she could speak, she endeavoured to give me good advice.

"Don't thwart him, Ada, dear; don't thwart him," she faltered. "He is so violent sometimes that I have to bear with him as if he were a child; but his anger passes off. For my sake try and bear with him, too."

I promised I would be submissive, and she attempted, as in duty bound, to dissuade me from thinking of Henry Avenant; then, when I had sat with her an hour, she sent me up to my room, lest my father should return and find us together.

I had now been struck by the first great sorrow of my life, and it so stunned me that I could only sit and shed tears helplessly. My astonishment was equal to my grief; for, considering my father's past coldness to me, I had thought he would be glad to see me married to anybody. Henry Avenant was of good family; he had £300 a year besides his stipend, and he was in expectation of soon getting a living; so that his position was all that a girl in my circumstances could expect. My father was junior partner in a firm of wine merchants, easy in his means, but not rich. There was little reason why he should object to Mr. Avenant on the score of money, and there seemed to be none why he

should harbour any personal dislike towards a young clergyman who was esteemed and admired by all who knew him.

It occurred to me that they must have had a quarrel before Harry came to make his proposal; but in that case Harry would surely have told me of it; and, now I came to think on the subject, I recollected that on the previous Sunday my father had spoken in praise of Mr. Avenant, saying how well he preached, and how earnest he was in his profession. The whole thing was incomprehensible to me, and I was reduced to wondering whether my father was opposing my marriage, with such uncalled-for cruelty, merely with the object of giving me pain.

For two days I remained a voluntary prisoner in my room, where my meals were brought to me. My brothers and sisters, hearing, I suppose, that I was in disgrace, did not intrude upon my solitude, and my father did not communicate with me in any way. But on the third day, which was Sunday, I was ordered to come down, and go to church with the others. From this I inferred that Henry Avenant was no longer curate; and the surmise proved correct. The rector performed the service alone; and as we were leaving the church I overheard some of the people saying that Mr. Avenant had departed from the town.

He was gone, and had not written me a line to tell me where he was going, or to bid me take patience and wait for better times. During several days I thought he would write. I used to steal down-stairs early in the morning so as to get

a first sight of the letters which the postman brought ; and I mutely interrogated the glances of the servants, thinking that Harry would perhaps correspond with me through one of them. But nothing came, and this was harder for me to bear than all the rest.

If Harry had but sent a message to assure me of his constancy and truth, I could have borne our separation with courage ; nay, if he had written to bid me run away from home and be privately married to him I should have done it, I loved him so dearly. But, unless I was written to, I could not write to him to let him know of my state of mind, and the misery of this was unspeakably bitter. I soon lost all appetite, took no food, and fell ill ; and the doctor, understanding nothing of my complaint, did what is usual by prescribing a change of air.

My father at that time announced that he must go to the south of Spain on business connected with his wine trade, and he said that I should accompany him. He had not abused me again since the day of his first outburst ; and had relapsed into his old manner—distant and speaking little. I would much rather not have gone with him to Spain, but he left me no option.

“It is all nonsense your fretting like that, Ada,” he said, when he was giving orders for my things to be packed. “A pretty girl like you need not break her heart over a curate. You have not seen enough of the world yet. When you return from Seville your cheeks will be in bloom again, and your mind more rational.”

These words were not spoken in a kindly tone; but with a look that was sarcastic and repellent. My brothers and sisters, however, all regarded me as a lucky girl for going on what they called a pleasure-trip; and, lest I should be thought sulky, I tried to show myself grateful for what was being done on my behalf. So I prepared for my journey, if not with high spirits, at least with a show of cheerfulness.

During the days that preceded my departure, I meditated anxiously as to whether I ought not to brave all conventionalities by writing to Harry Avenant. I longed to do it, and yet, when it came to the point, did not dare. Why did he not write to me, since he was bound by no such rules as fetter a girl's will? I knew that my father had not intercepted any letter from him, for I had questioned my mother on the subject; but even if a letter had been intercepted, I should have known that he was thinking of me, and that would have been enough. My one small ray of comfort came from reflecting that Harry was possibly acting according to some plan of his own, and that he would judge of my character by the fortitude with which I supported this trial. Nevertheless, I left England with as sad a heart as ever a girl carried in going for a trip that was to recruit her health.

We travelled so quickly through France and Spain that my health could not have been benefited much, even had I been stronger. As my father took no pains to make himself agreeable on the way, I was, perhaps, more at ease in

railway carriages, where I was not obliged to talk, than I might have been elsewhere; and yet I could not but be struck by the unfeeling manner in which he hurried me from train to train, never allowing me to sleep in an hotel even for a single night until, after five days, we arrived at Seville.

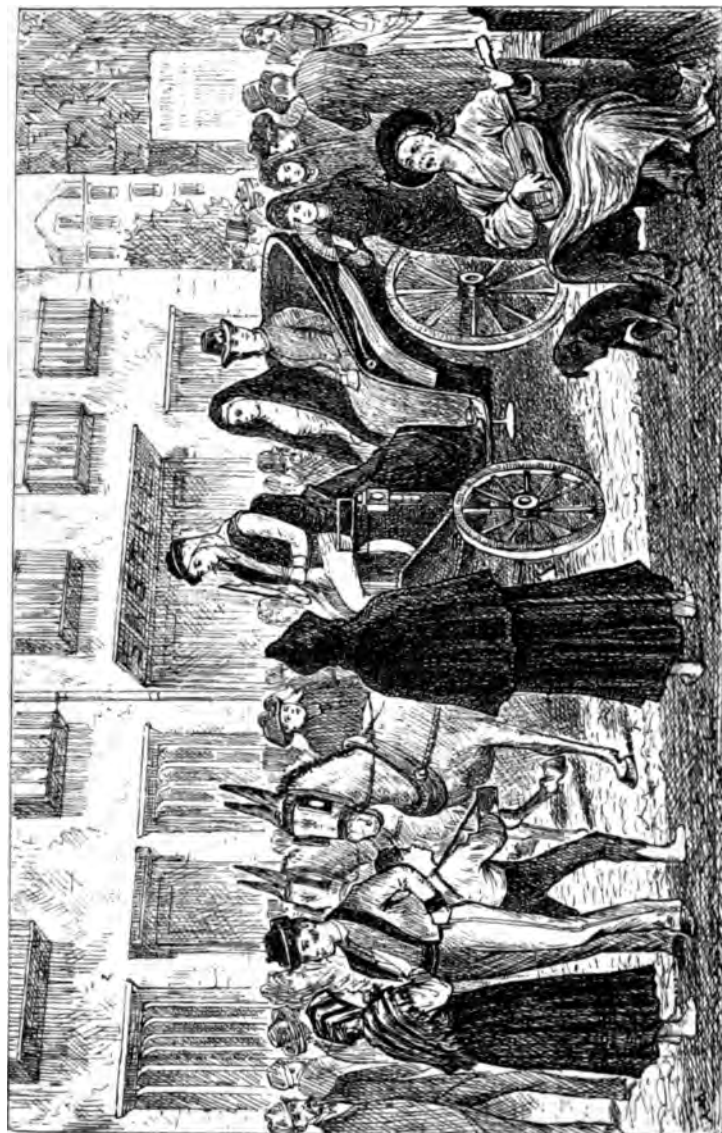
On reaching the Andalusian city I was so exhausted that I went to bed at once, although it was broad daylight, and did not stir out of my room till the evening of the following day. I passed a wretched night on account of the mosquitoes, for I had been unable to understand the maid's directions about closing the mosquito net round my bed properly. In the morning some very nice chocolate was brought me; and my father sent me a message to say that it would be too hot for me to go out of doors during the day-time, but that he would return in the evening and take me for a walk. He was obliged to go out himself to attend to his business.

I did not see him again. Late in the afternoon a letter was brought me from him to the effect that he found himself under the necessity of going into the country to see the proprietor of a vineyard, and that, as the roads were bad and the travelling in mule diligences fatiguing, he would not take me with him. As he might be absent three days, however, and as it was undesirable that I should remain alone in an hotel all that time, he had made arrangements for my being received as a guest in the Carmelite Convent of Maria de los Dolores, the Mother Superior of which could

speak English. I should be treated with every kindness, and the Mother Superior would provide me with a chaperone to show me all that was worth looking at in Sevilla. In a postscript he added that the bearer of his letter would be a nun, who was sent to fetch me.

The suddenness of these arrangements left me no time to reflect on them. The maid who handed me the letter told me in broken French that two nuns were waiting below. So, hastily putting a few things into a bag, I went down-stairs and joined my conductresses. I was rather surprised to learn that there were two of them; but recollected having heard that by the rules of certain conventual orders the sisters were not allowed to go out alone. They were both ugly, brown-faced women of middle age, in black robes, and their hands were buried in their wide sleeves, which they held before them like muffs. They received me with grave bows, but when I spoke to them they shook their heads to intimate that they did not understand. We got into a very dusty, shabby cab, drawn by a pair of mules with rope harness; and, during the drive to the convent, the nuns did not open their lips or look at me. They kept their eyes downcast.

We were about a quarter of an hour on our way, jolting through narrow streets with tall houses, and passing bare-footed monks, and priests with long shovel hats, at every turn. The city seemed to swarm with them. It was still very hot, for the sun was only just setting, and whenever we crossed an open space the glare from the white paving



"We got into a very dusty, shabby cab, drawn by a pair of mules, with rope harness."

stones was blinding. Skirting a long grey wall, overhung with the branches of sycamores, our driver presently slackened speed, till he drew up at a large door surmounted by a crucifix.

Here we alighted, and I unsuspectingly entered a place of confinement which I was not to leave for more than five years.



CHAPTER II.

I realise that I am a prisoner and am overwhelmed with grief and dread.—

After an angry interview with the Mother Superior I explore my new home.—The convent garden.—A mysterious missive.

I EXPECTED to be conducted to a parlour, where I should see the Mother Superior, but instead of that my two companions led me through a garden path and under a gateway opened by a portress in nun's habit. We then went round some cloisters and entered a block of building that was very old and silent, and passed through a number of flagged passages till we came to a door where there was a bell-chain. One of the nun's rang, and the door was opened from the inside; we then descended a broad flight of time-worn steps, and I found myself in a circular vault that was almost dark. The nun who had given us admittance held a lantern, and the other two now waited for her to lead the way. I was beginning to think all this more romantic than comfortable, when the nun with the lantern unlocked a door and stood aside for me to pass. I walked into a cell, and the door behind me was immediately closed and double-locked.

I could not at the moment realise what had taken place. An English girl brought up by sensible mistresses, as I had

been, is not quick to believe in mysterious kidnappings and enforced confinement within convent walls ; but in a minute or two, as I stared blankly at the closed door, the whole truth flashed upon me—how I had been brought into Spain on purpose to be placed here, and was now, by my father's authority, to remain a prisoner.

I was terribly frightened, but not so much by the thought of being in a convent as by the sight of the cell in which I had been so unceremoniously locked up. I had always tried to be religious—more so than ever since I had known Henry Avenant—and all institutions connected with the worship of Christ under any creed were very sacred in my eyes. If my father had told me frankly that he intended to place me in a convent, I should have stipulated for the free exercise of my own religion, but should not have questioned his right to dispose of me as he pleased, so long as I was under age. If I had been introduced to a kind Mother Superior and put into a proper room, however plainly furnished, if I had been allowed to have English books and to write home, I might even have welcomed the perfect rest of convent life until the day when I should be my own mistress.

But this cell in which I stood was worse than that in any English prison. It had no furniture in it but a low pallet bed, without sheets ; the floor was of earth, full of holes and lumps, parts of the walls were mossy from damp ; and only a very little light came in through a small, barred air-hole, several feet above the bed, and without glass. Soon, as

night advanced, the cell became perfectly dark, and I sat on the bed, asking myself whether I was awake or whether my reason was failing me ?

I must have sat for an hour, forcing myself to be calm that I might consider my position in all its aspects. Everything was so silent that I could distinctly hear the ticking of my watch. I crept to the door, and groping with my hands found a little barred aperture, at which I listened, straining my ear to catch other sounds. I could not see beyond the bars, as there was a closed trap-door. All at once my blood seemed to stand still as I heard some furious shrieking and kicking at a door, which proceeded apparently from another cell. It continued without any intermission for a long time, and it was evident that the woman who made it was a maniac. So there were lunatics in this convent and I was among them !

This discovery robbed me of all the strength I had managed to muster up during my first hour in the cell, and I threw myself on my knees before the bed in a paroxysm of fear and distress, praying God to have pity on me and take me under His protection. I endeavoured to call to mind all the bad things I had done or thought which might have deserved me this punishment, and I prayed for strength to bear it ; but, above all, I prayed against terrors that might overwhelm me and unsettle my reason. My supplications were, indeed, wrestlings of the spirit, and I did not rise from my knees until I had prevailed over my fears, and obtained the peace of feeling that God would not desert me.

But I cried woefully, and when I lay down on the bed, without undressing myself, I soon fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

A ray of sunlight was streaming into my cell when I awoke, and I saw by my watch it was six o'clock. My anguish of mind on awaking and remembering where I was nearly brought on a new fit of crying, but I struggled against it, knowing I should require all my self-possession to face whatever trials might be in store for me that day. By the help of the articles in my bag and of a jug of water that stood in a corner of the cell, I made a summary toilet; then I took out my Bible and Prayer-book and read through the psalms and lessons for the day. I had just laid the books aside when the door opened, and two nuns—not the same as those whom I had seen the day before—appeared and beckoned to be to come out. I made signs to ask them whether I should put on my hat and cloak, and they nodded in reply. They also pointed to my bag, which made me exult in the hope that I should not be brought back to that horrid cell.

I was led out of the vault which I had crossed by lantern-light on the previous night, and again passed round the cloisters, where I noticed a cool fountain playing in the centre of a grass plot. We came to a door, and I was ushered into a large room, wainscoted, where a lady, whom I took to be the Mother Superior, sat alone at a long table, with an ivory crucifix before her, and some letters. She was a woman of about thirty, with handsome dark eyes, but

a complexion as pale as wax. Her mien was severe, and she made no friendly response to the appealing glance with which I met hers, expecting she would address me in English. After eyeing me anxiously for a moment, she spoke to me in bad French, mixed with Spanish, but yet intelligible, because each word was pronounced slowly.

"You are a very wicked girl" (*une très mauvaise fille*) she said, "but you are ill in the head" (she touched her forehead). "*El diablo* has possessed you; he has turned you from the holy religion of your good father and mother and made you a heretic" (she signed herself and the two other nuns did the same devoutly). "You have ruined the soul of a young Catholic priest, who, owing to you, has been expelled from his diocese by the Bishop."

"Oh, madame, who can have told you such things?" I asked, blushing all over; "there is not a word of truth in them."

"It was your father who told me," answered the Abbess, drily, "and he is a good Catholic; you have broken his heart."

"You must have misunderstood him," I answered, thinking that, as the Mother Superior spoke no English and my father little French, their intercourse could not have been very plain, but she contradicted me by saying that my father had come with a priest who spoke English, and who had told her all about my wicked life.

"Moreover," she said, "your father has left you here to repent and be cured" (she touched her forehead again).



“‘I shall do no such thing,’ I replied, hugging them closer. ‘My religion is as good as yours, Madam.’”

"*El diablo* must be expelled from your body: you are a child, and cannot be allowed to imperil your soul. What have you inside that bag?"

I opened my bag, and she immediately pounced upon the Bible and Prayer-book in it. Seeing what they were, she flashed a furious glance at me and dashed them to the floor, exclaiming in agitation:

"Heretical! impious! Since this convent was founded no such books have ever entered here."

Now my Bible and Prayer-book were very precious to me, not only for their own sakes, but because they were presents from the kind mistresses at the school where I had been brought up, so I stooped to pick them up, and tears of indignation gushed from my eyes as I did so.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, madame," I said, forgetting all prudence.

"You are insolent," she answered, drawing herself up haughtily, "but we will correct you. Throw those books down instantly."

"I shall do no such thing," I replied, hugging them closer. "My religion is as good as yours, madame, and whether I remain here a day or a year I will not change it; so you may save yourself the trouble of trying to convert me. And, what is more, I tell you that I am an English girl, and that if you use any violence towards me you will be made to regret it."

I had great faith at that time in being an English girl, for I had not been taught to believe it possible that unlawful

violence could be done to one of our nation with impunity. Luckily for me the Abbess was a woman of high birth and great spirit, who had not a particle of meanness in her nature, and she was also sincerely pious. After gazing angrily at me for a full minute, during which my eyes did not quail, she covered her face with her right hand, and her lips moved as if she were asking counsel of Heaven. When she looked up again she was not less severe than before, but much calmer; and by that time I had got my own feelings under control. The Abbess spoke a few words to the two nuns, who had shown no signs of life during the interview, except to sign themselves every time the words heretic and *diablo* were uttered, and I was conducted by them out of the room, taking my bag with me.

I made sure now that I should be taken back to the cell whence I had come, but I was led to a cell, or rather a room, which opened on to the cloisters and was close to the Abbess's audience chamber. It was a very habitable place, lighted by a window heavily barred, but provided with a venetian blind. There was a bed, with clean sheets and counterpane; a table, chair, and a small chest of drawers. The floor was boarded, and over the head of the bed hung a crucifix of painted wood. Here the two nuns left me, and did not lock the door as they went out.

It was such a relief to be treated in this way after what I had apprehended, that for some minutes I sat overcome, rejoicing with thankfulness that I had not allowed myself to be intimidated by the Abbess's suspicious manner. But

my position was sufficiently serious to set me musing in an anxious strain over the untruths which had been told to the Abbess concerning me. What could the priest who accompanied my father have meant by saying that my parents were Roman Catholics, that I had changed my religion in antagonism to their wishes, and had led astray a young Catholic priest? Were these the stupid fables of a man who understood English less well than he pretended, or were they malicious stories which my father had told to the priest?


I could not believe my father guilty of such perfidy. When suspicions assailed me, coming from the incomprehensible harshness of his conduct to me of late, I thrust them aside; and preferred to think that he had been misunderstood by his interpreter, and had no worse intention than to put it out of my power, whilst I was yet a minor, to contract a marriage which he disapproved. This was hard enough, and yet there was some sweetness to me in thinking that I was suffering for Henry Avenant's sake. Surely, if my father were placing such obstacles between us, it must be because Henry had refused to renounce his purpose of marrying me, or to promise that he would hold no further communication with me till I was of age? "Poor Harry!" Well, I thought, we should be all the dearer to each other when these troubles are ended, and we can speak of them together.

When I had been about half an hour alone, one of those silent wooden-faced nuns came into my room with a bowl of

chocolate and a roll, which she set on the table, retiring afterwards without a word. As I had not eaten since noon the day before, I was in want of food, and this breakfast revived me and gave me more courage. My door being unfastened, I thought I would venture out, and try how far my liberty extended.

The nun who had brought me the chocolate was pacing up and down the cloisters with slow steps, her hands in her sleeves, and her eyes looking on the ground—an attitude which I could not help thinking very affected; it was suitable for moments of solemn meditation, but if this woman were thinking of my chocolate or her dinner what propriety was there in appearing so sanctimonious? I passed her and she took no notice of me; but wherever I went she followed, at ten paces behind. I walked round the cloisters, stopping to look at a few memorial tablets, clamped to the walls, and covered with Latin inscriptions, which I could not read, then I passed under an archway and found myself in a large and lovely garden.

At first sight it seemed to be of boundless extent, for the walls that enclosed it were hidden by trees. There were groves of orange trees in it, mulberries, avenues of sycamores, two or three splendid cedars, with branches spreading out from the ground, and flower beds, all a-bloom with roses of every hue—from the saffron yellow to the deep velvety purple. Several nuns were gardening among the flower beds, whilst others were gathering fruit from espaliers, loaded with the finest peaches and apricots, or stooping over



melon beds, and turning up the glass globes that covered fruit of immense size. But all these women stood apart from one another, and worked as if they were deaf and dumb.

As it was barely eight o'clock and the sun had not yet begun to blaze with full heat, there was coolness in the shade, and I took a pleasant stroll under the leafy trees. I saw some nuns mooning about singly in sequestered walks, others were seated on stone benches, of which there were many, but whenever I approached one of them, she turned her back to me and stood motionless, like a naughty child put in a corner. I was beginning to wonder whether no sound of human voice was ever heard in this garden, when, turning into an avenue of chestnuts, I came suddenly upon a group of twenty girls, laughing, chattering, and playing as gaily as could be, under the not-too-watchful superintendence of an elderly nun, who sat with her back against a tree and dozed. Some of the younger girls appeared to be ten years old; two or three of the eldest looked as if they were of my own age, and all were dressed alike in black merino dresses, with mantillas of the same material very tastefully draped round their heads and shoulders. All of them had black fans, and a few had stuck scarlet roses in their hair.

I paused for a moment, colouring shyly, and hesitating whether I should advance, but as all the girls stood still, beginning to flutter their fans, and staring at me, I advanced and made them a bow. This they answered by performing

the most ceremonious curtseys, those of them who were seated standing up to go through this piece of politeness ; but when I had passed on, I heard them all whispering and



rustling their fans in great commotion, doubtless speculating who I was, and making comments on my appearance. However, the sight of the girls, who, I concluded, were being educated in the convent, made me inexpressibly glad, and

quite altered my opinion of the place. "I dare say I shall not be so unhappy here," I reflected, "if somebody will only be kind and speak to me."

Nobody did speak to me all that day. When I returned to my room at about nine, as the sun grew too hot to allow of one's remaining out of doors, the nun, who had followed me all the while, entered with me, and touched me on the shoulder to show me how to work the venetian blind, and lower a pink and white awning that was fastened outside. A few moments later I heard a heavy splash of water on this awning, and I saw a nun playing upon it with a garden hose. This watering process was renewed every quarter of an hour throughout the hot part of the day, and served to keep the room agreeably cool. During my absence a mosquito curtain of thin muslin had been rigged over my bed, and I found all my linen and clothes laid on the counterpane, showing that my luggage had been sent from the hotel. Some books which I had brought from England had, however, been confiscated.

I could now entertain no hope that my father had told me the truth in saying that I was only to remain in the convent three days whilst he was in the country. But if he had deceived me in one particular why not in several? It hurt me so much to think evil of my father, that I resolved not to reason upon his conduct until I could do so in a calmer frame of mind. One thing was certain, namely, that so long as I was a minor he had the right to put me in whatever school he pleased; so my best plan was to look upon this

convent as only a school, and to ask the Abbess's permission that I might learn Spanish—which I determined to do next day.

Just as this resolution had shaped itself in my mind I heard a rustling of paper on the window sill, and turning round saw that somebody had pushed through the open window a slip on which these words were pencilled in English :

"Do not, I pray you, be obstinate. Do as the Mother Superior commands, or you will be very, very unhappy. Tear this in small pieces."



CHAPTER III.

Sister Santa Incarnation instructs me in Spanish.—The convent rules and discipline.—Dementia among the nuns.—The Abbess discovers that I possess a talent for drawing and for music.

WHAT good Samaritan could it be who had sent me that message? The knowledge that there was an Englishwoman in the convent, and that she took an interest in me, brought me the consolation of feeling that I should not remain utterly friendless, though I knew not how to construe her warning about obeying the Abbess's commands. That I could change my religion on compulsion was out of the question; but of course it would be my duty to show obedience to all the ordinary rules of the house.

They kept early hours in the convent. The bell rang for matins at five, and after service all the labours of the day commenced. I was dressed by six o'clock, and asked the nun on guard in the cloisters if I could see the "Madre?" Making no answer she led me into the presence of the Abbess, who sat as rigidly in her high-backed chair as if she had not moved from it since the day before. I went through a respectful obeisance and asked whether I might be allowed to write to my father and mother?

"Your father does not wish to receive letters from you," replied the Mother Superior, "I shall write myself to him when I think you are thoroughly penitent, and perhaps he will send you a letter then."

"May I have some occupation then, madame? Will you allow me to learn Spanish?"

"Yes; but I have a difficulty to face. How can I suffer one of my nuns to converse with you if you trouble her with your detestable heresies?"

"I will promise not to speak on religion, madame," I replied.

"You must listen to all that is said to you on religion and not answer," said the Abbess. "You must hearken humbly, remembering that all spirit of contrairiness comes from the devil whispering in you. Do you promise this?"

"Yes, madame."

"Then make the sign of the Cross." I made it without hesitation, and the Abbess seemed pleased, for she spoke more mildly.

"I will trust you," she said. "You are a great sinner, but will, I hope, repent. A *neuvaine* (nine-days' prayer) was commenced in the chapel this morning for your conversion. Think of that, and do not wickedly harden yourself against the prayers that will be made for you night and day."

It was plain that the Abbess believed every word that had been said against me; but I could see that the prospect of converting by spiritual means a stubborn reprobate, such as

I, had introduced a pleasurable excitement into her monotonous life. Her nuns also were no doubt very eager about it. I left the Abbess's room, sorrowing at not being suffered to write home, and less able than ever to conjecture whether my conversion was to be attempted in accordance with my father's wishes, or through a misapprehension as to what he desired. Nevertheless, it was something to have obtained the privilege of receiving lessons.

The same morning, after I had breakfasted and taken my walk in the garden, there was a knock at my door, and a young nun, with a simple face, came in. She was about twenty-five, of fair complexion and rather pretty; but a weak, almost childish, smile played over her lips as she said to me in English :

"My name is Sister Santa Incarnation; I have come to give you lessons in Spanish."

"It is very kind of you," I said, rising, and smiling at her, in hopes of showing her that she would have a good-natured pupil. "Are there many other English nuns in the convent besides you?"

"I am the only one," she answered, blushing; "and it was I who put that piece of paper into your window yesterday. It was very wrong of me, and I have just confessed it to our reverend Mother, who is so good that she would not allow me to choose my own penance, but inflicted one herself—a very slight one."

"Why was it very wrong of you?" I asked. "I have to thank you for doing me a kind service."

“It was wrong, because I did not ask our Mother’s leave; and I begged you to tear up the note in small pieces—which was cunning and wicked. None but the devil could have dictated such deceit. Oh, sister, I wish I could be quite good, but it is so difficult!”

She shook her head woefully, and one could see that the better part of her life was spent in trying to imagine herself very wicked. As I came to know more of her I saw that her whole mind was absorbed in the contemplation of her own imperfections, and the minute analysis of the motives which dictated her slightest actions. She took such a pleasure in confessing her sins, that I believe she committed peccadilloes on purpose that she might have something to confess and do penance for. The poor girl’s entire conversation was made up of canting—taking that word to mean the expression, in methodical language, of sentiments which are forced.

She kept a book, which she called the *Actu consciencie*, in which she wrote down daily all the naughty things she had done or imagined, and if this book was a faithful record it showed that she had the mind of a child, for it treated only of childish things. One day she let me read a few pages of it; and when I had finished she told me that she must make a *mea culpa* for having yielded to the sin of vanity in having shown me her book that she might receive praise from me. Next day she recurred to that subject, and knelt with joined hands to beg my pardon for having “wickedly deceived me in writing out a special page for my perusal from which she

had omitted her weightiest sins''; what these sins were she did not say.

Sister Santa Incarnation, inured to long silence, was ill-fitted to be a good instructress, for she was incapable of sustained attention, her mind fluttering from trifle to trifle like an uncaged bird from twig to twig. But Spanish is an easy language, and, as I was diligent to learn, I quickly picked up the rudiments of it by the help of the school-books we had, and of conversation with the sister, who spoke it beautifully. She gave me two lessons, each of an hour's duration, every day, and I valued her companionship, for she was the only person with whom I talked: I was made to live quite alone, like an excommunicant. Bells rang several times every day for the chapel, the refectory, devotional meditations, and other things, but I was never summoned to join in the exercises of the nuns or pupils. My meals were brought me to my own room—chocolate at seven; dinner at eleven, of meat and vegetables, and delicious fruit from the garden; and at five supper of fish or poultry, with fruit again. I walked in the garden when I pleased, but nobody spoke to me.

Sister Santa Incarnation had told me that so soon as I would recant my heresy and be baptized I should be placed among the other pupils, most of whom were young ladies of noble families: but that so long as I remained a heretic I could not be allowed to go among them nor to enter the chapel. She was very anxious about my conversion, poor girl, and informed me that she got out of her bed for an

hour every night and prayed for it, kneeling on the cold stones; and that dozens of the nuns were subjecting themselves to the severest penances for my sake—that is in order that the torments of my diabolical possession might be shortened.

All this was very horrible, but what could I do? for the more I saw of these nuns' lives the less did I feel inclined towards the gloomy, half-crazed, and, as it seemed to me, idolatrous religion which they practised. Salvation by mortification of the body was the sum of their creed, and they conformed to it with an ingenuity of self-torture almost incredible. The rule of their order (Discalced Carmelites) was, by itself, frightfully severe. They went barefoot, rose at midnight for service in the chapel, ate no meat, eggs, butter, fish, or poultry, and were only allowed to talk with one another for an hour a week—on Sunday, after vespers. They slept on beds without sheets, in cells like that where I had spent my first night; and their habits were most unclean.

I am sorry to say Sister Santa Incarnation, though an English girl, thought it almost a sin to wash. She had not handled a piece of soap since she had taken the veil, and her only ablutions consisted in occasionally passing a wet hand over her face, without wiping it, for she had no towel. During summer she had a clean chemise of sackcloth every three weeks; in the rainy season one of rough black baize, which was worn three months. The remainder of her costume consisted of a black serge gown with wide sleeves,

hooked very high in the throat, and girt with a knotted rope. On her head, which was closely cropped as a boy's, was set a white linen bonnet, shaped like a quakeress's poke, with a broad white band pressed over her forehead, and this head-dress was surmounted with a black merino veil, which flowed over the shoulders, except when she was in chapel or doing penance, when it was drawn over the face. There were two eyeholes for her to see through. One morning Sister Santa Incarnation, being under penance, came to give me her lesson with her veil down, causing me to start with fright when she walked in.

But stern, indeed, as the rules of the convent were, it was by penances and self-imposed privations that the nuns contrived to make their lives so hard. The present Abbess had found considerable laxity prevailing in the house when she was appointed to rule over it, and, being young and enthusiastic, she had restored discipline; but, as often happens, she had, by her example, diffused so much zeal, that her efforts were now directed towards preventing her nuns from doing themselves to death by austerities. Thus she dared no longer permit a nun to choose her own penance, so barbarous were the punishments which some of the sisters had inflicted on themselves.

One day a nun came to her, confessing a fault into which she said she had fallen again and again, and she begged that she might pronounce her own punishment, so as to root out her sin once and for all. The Abbess refused, and inflicted a penance of her own, which seemed to the penitent too

mild. The next day the nun returned and accused herself of something much worse—something, indeed, very bad—and this time the scandalised Abbess suffered her to choose her own penance. The nun thereupon bared her shoulders and called upon another sister, as fanatical as herself, to give her three hundred and sixty-five blows with her knotted girdle, striking with all her might. The castigation was inflicted to the last blow, when the nun, crawling, almost dead, to the Abbess's feet, prayed that she might have a hundred blows more, because she had told a lie in accusing herself falsely of the second offence in order that she might get a sharp punishment for the first, which she deemed had been sufficiently expiated. How was it possible for any woman, herself ecstatic, to rule with any judgment over such puzzling creatures as these?

Even when she did her best to restrain excesses, the Mother Superior had no control over the penances inflicted by the order or consent of the Father Confessor—a stupid old Franciscan monk, who sat in the convent chapel to hear penitents every Friday. She could not either interfere with the so-called good works and “free-will offerings” made by the nuns for the propitiation of divers saints. These free-will offerings consisted in sacrifices of meals, or portions of them. A nun sitting down very hungry to table would say: “I offer up half my dinner to the Blessed Saint Anne, whose feast it is.” A rule of the order forbade any eating or drinking between meals, unless by permission of the Abbess, so that a sister who wanted to quench her

thirst on a hot summer afternoon had to go and beg leave to drink a mug of water. The permission was never refused, but it often happened that when a nun had filled her mug she would coolly pour its contents on to the ground, saying: "Holy Virgin, I give this water to the poor souls in purgatory."

Individual vanity finding its only scope in such works as the above, the nuns were constantly trying to outvie one another in their acts of self-denial, so that illness was frequent, and insanity a thing of no rare occurrence. When a nun became mad her treatment depended on the nature of her insanity. If she was stricken with what doctors call *melancholia*, seeing visions, mumbling to herself, redoubling her austerities, and occasionally breaking out into wild preachings, she was regarded as a saint who had been illumined, and she lived as she pleased, exempt from all rules, and receiving the utmost worship from the other sisters.

But sometimes the insanity showed itself in wild *dementia*, during which the patient yelled, laughed, shrieked out awful blasphemies and other abominable language; and then she was said to be suffering from devilish possession, and was removed to an *in pace*, that is, one of those cells underground, where I had spent my first night. There were twenty of them, and more than half the number were always tenanted; but all the occupants were not nuns. As I subsequently discovered, *there are no lunacy laws in Spain*, and when a person goes out of his, or her, mind in that country, a religious house is used as an asylum. This removes all need

for a doctor's certificate, and saves the patient's family from the distress of confessing that it owns a lunatic member. The patient is said to have "retired into religion," and there is an end of the matter, for as monasteries and convents are not inspected by any public authority, nobody has the means of ascertaining whether persons are rightly confined there or not.

When I had learned most of these facts from my conversation with Sister Santa Incarnation (who was as easily questioned as a child, though she had her orders to be reserved, and imagined that she obeyed them), I felt, as I have already said, a positive loathing for the nunnery and its perverse practices, which I could reconcile with no form of religion which I had been taught to think acceptable to the Creator. I felt I would rather die than debase myself to such miserable superstitions as I witnessed; but an event soon occurred which caused the whole strength of the convent to be brought to bear in shaking my stubbornness.

Among the things which I had brought from England was a sketch-book, and having no English books to make my leisure hours pass, I used to while away some time with my pencil. One morning, going out into the garden for my customary walk, I took my sketch-book with me, and sat down on a bench to draw a pretty view of the convent chapel, the last window of which, of curious composite architecture, half-Moorish, faced a corner of the garden. This proceeding of mine excited the astonishment of a nun, who was tending a flower bed, and she ran to tell the Superior. The Abbess

soon came out, walking in her stately way, with her waxen face, which seemed to grow paler every time I saw it. I had not spoken with her for several weeks, and she gave me no greeting, but held out a thin, white hand for my book.

Now I had drawn in it several portrait heads from memory, the Abbess's among them; this was carefully sketched, and so was Sister Santa Incarnation's; but there were two heads of old nuns slightly caricatured. I looked up reddening, for I expected to be scolded; but the ghost of a smile was playing over the Abbess's blanched lips.

"*Vous dessinez bien,*" she said. "Can you play the piano?"

"Yes, madame."

"Come with me, then."

I followed the Abbess out of the garden, and was followed in my turn by an attendant nun; for, night and day, some sister was told off as a sentry to watch my movements. We passed into a wing of the convent, which was reserved for the school pupils; and here I was led into a room where there was a cottage piano, woefully out of tune. A handsome girl of eighteen was practising her scales, with a very unsteady touch, under the ears of the sleepy old nun whom I had seen before.

The girl rose, made a deep curtsey to the Mother Superior, and at a sign from her left the room. But the old nun and the one who was in waiting on me remained. The Abbess then ordered me to play anything I pleased.

There was some old music on the piano, simple ballads (with the words carefully inked out), and some religious

music. I first played a selection from these to show I could read at sight; then, as the Abbess did not tell me to stop, I played, from memory, airs from operas, waltzes, gallops—just as if I were at a child's party. When at length I turned round, my attendant nun had her mouth contorted into a sort of imbecile smile of rapture, her eyes being half-closed and lifted towards the ceiling. The Abbess was standing motionless, gazing out of a window, with her back towards me. When she turned round I saw that she was strangely moved.

“Your good father has caused you to receive an excellent education,” she said. “Pray God it may be turned to good account.”

From that moment the Abbess resolved that I must be converted without delay. Among the nuns who managed the school department there were none who played or sketched well; so the purpose was formed of utilising me as piano and drawing mistress.



CHAPTER IV.

My conversion is determined upon.—Self-imposed sacrifices on part of the nuns to secure it.—I am baptised in the convent chapel, a duke and a duchess being my sponsors.—I am permitted to write to my father.—Am appointed drawing and music mistress to the convent pupils.

WHETHER the Mother Superior was a judge of character I know not ; but she read me aright, if she concluded that my conversion could not be effected by harshness ; on the other hand, she had little softness in her own nature, and was too high-minded to try winning me by any artifices of flattery, or pampering. The aids on which she relied were spiritual. She summoned a Chapter of the nuns, and proclaimed a nine days' fast and prayer in my behalf—not a mere *neuvaine*, but nine days of humiliation, vigils, and earnest entreaties, all to be directed towards one object. So long as I remained in my heresy, she declared it was as though the Archfiend himself had his habitation in the convent ; and, for the honour of the Order, she besought her sisters to remove this scandal, praying for me hourly, and before all other persons, until their importunities should prevail with heaven. The passionate earnestness with which the Abbess addressed these words, like an indignant queen whose realms have been

invaded, fired her nuns with a frantic ardour of proselytism, and they followed her straightway to the chapel, fervent and clamorous as crusaders.

The effect of all this was to bring upon me such a persecution as I can hardly describe. I was made to know, in the ways best calculated to move a girl's compassion, what things were being suffered in the convent on my account. If I walked out of my room I found a nun (sometimes two or three nuns), prostrated on the cold stones of the cloisters, with her face to the ground, and her arms spread out. In this posture she, or they, would remain for hours in silent prayer. Sister Santa Incarnation, looking very weak and poorly from privations, would tell me, with her childish smile, that she and eleven others had formed a bread-and-water league in my behalf. They had vowed to feed on nothing but bread and water for forty days, unless I got "cured" in the meanwhile. Other leagues had vowed not to sleep in their beds; others to cover their bread with ashes, at the risk of catching gastric fever; others to inflict bodily tortures on themselves. There was a young nun (she had but lately taken the veil) who put branches of rose-trees, with all the thorns in them, in her bed, and lay down on them; many of the other tortures were quite sickening to hear of.

Had I been a hard-hearted girl, I must have been moved by such atrocities; but I was not hard-hearted, and the misery I felt began to tell on my own health. I had not a friend to advise me. I prayed and communed with myself,

seeking to discover what was the right way in which I should go ; but I saw no light to guide me. It was all in vain to remonstrate with Sister Santa Incarnation. One day, when she had become so feeble from her fasting that her voice was hardly audible, I said :

“Sister, how can you think it is any pleasure to God that you should torment yourself this way ?”

“God sees the intention,” she answered, smiling faintly. “We can do so little for Him at our best, but every little we do pleases.”

“But to injure your health is no righteous sacrifice—only think on the subject.”

“We have no wealth,” she replied. “Our bodies and our food are our only possessions. We must give of such things as we have. I wish I could die for you, sister.”

“But what good would that do to me ? I should be left quite without a friend then ; you know you grieve me when you say such things.”


She shook her head sadly. “You need not fear, sister ; I am not good enough to die for you. Sister Santa Elma, who is a saint, has offered up her life for your soul, and it will be accepted. . . . Hark ! do you hear the chapel bell ? . . .”

She arose with her face all bright, then sank to her knees and muttered a prayer. “Hush, it’s the passing bell,” she whispered, “we were told this morning that Sister Santa Elma was dying. She was in weak health, but she fasted for you as no one else could or dared fast. Sister, there are steps in the cloisters—they are bringing her to you !”

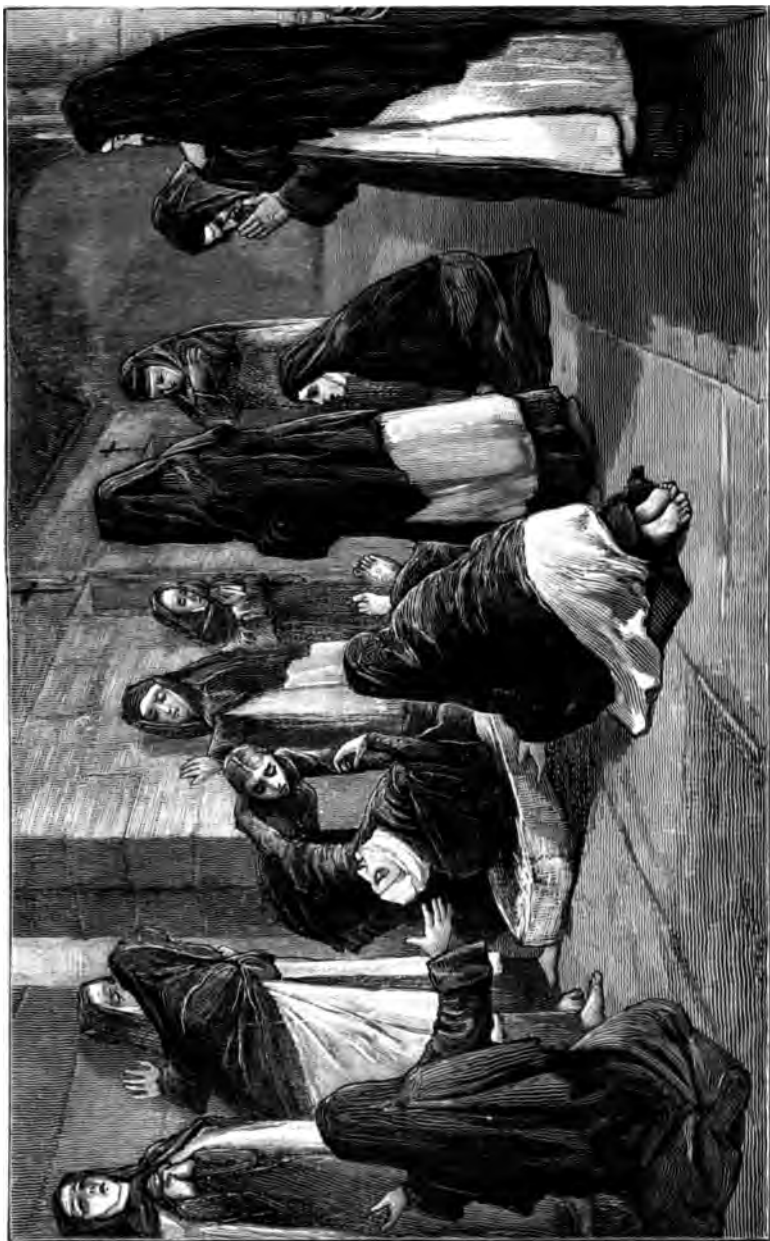
My door was opened, and I was called out, all trembling, to see a poor, wasted creature, still young, who lay dying on a mattress, surrounded by a dozen nuns who had carried her. She was too weak to speak, but made a sign to me to approach ; and trying to throw her arms round my neck, exhausted all her strength in the effort, and died clinging to me.

Such trials were too heavy to be endured. If I had been ill-treated, I should have remained unshakable, looking to death for my ultimate deliverance. But to be the cause of suffering and misery to others, to think of a nun having famished herself to death for me, and of Sister Santa Incarnation killing herself by inches, was, in my lonely state, a worse anguish than physical pain. I began to reflect that I was not being asked to recant the Christian faith, but to embrace outwardly a form of religion whose doctrines were in most essentials like my own. Was it worth while to withstand a whole conventful of excited women, on a mere matter of external worship ? I thought on that passage in the sixth chapter of the 2nd Book of Kings, where Naaman craves Elisha's indulgence in a case of conscience similar to mine :—

“In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand ; and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon : when I bow myself down in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant for this thing.” And Elisha said to him : “Go in peace.”







" Trying to throw her arms round my neck, she exhausted all her strength in the effort, and died clinging to me."

I am afraid the peace of Naaman the Syrian was not mine on that day of misery when I heard that Sister Santa Incarnation had fallen ill, and when I burst into tears in the Abbess's presence, telling her I would adopt the Catholic religion. Her joy was great; she kissed me and blessed me; an exultant *Te Deum* was sung in the chapel; but I despised myself as the lowest of creatures. I had to submit to a fearful ordeal: it was when I was asked to deliver up my Bible and Prayer-book, and saw them burned in the kitchen stove. The Abbess asked me to throw them into the flames with my own hands; but this I refused to do, and she did not insist. I was not yet regenerated by the new baptism, and allowances could be made for my weakness.

Let me pass rapidly over what ensued during the next few weeks; it was a time which I do not care to remember. Before I could be baptised I had to be indoctrinated by the stupid old Franciscan monk, to whom I have before alluded, and who was the confessor of the convent. He came to see me every morning in the Abbess's room, and I sat with all the meekness I could command, whilst he droned to me explanations of his faith, which he himself little understood. After a month of this ordeal I was declared fit for baptism, and the day of my christening was celebrated as a solemn festival in the convent.

The Bishop of the diocese came to perform the rite, and my sponsors were a pious Duke and Duchess whom I had never seen before, and whom I have not met since, though

they renounced the devil, the world, and all its pomps for me, and bestowed on me two of their own names, *Maria Mercedes*. It seems that my conversion had made some other stir in religious circles out of doors. My noble godfather and godmother presented about £100 between them to the convent, in my name, and promised a like sum in case I should eventually take the veil. They also gave me a beautiful missal and ivory crucifix. Holding these gifts, and robed in white muslin, I was led to the font, like a sacrificial victim, before a crowd of spectators, and in sight of all the nuns clustering behind the bars which separated their part of the chapel from that to which the public were admitted on rare occasions like the present. The only gratification I drew from the ceremony was the thought that these poor women rejoiced in my conversion as a personal triumph, and thought themselves well recompensed for all the austerities to which they had subjected themselves. Every one of them kissed me when the service was over.

From the date of my baptism a new, and much less tedious, life began for me in the convent. The Abbess informed me that she was going to induct me into an office of great trust, and that I was thenceforth to teach music and drawing to the young ladies of the school; but she stipulated that I was on no account to speak to my pupils about my past life, or to let them suspect that I had entered the convent unwillingly.

“Do you still consider yourself a prisoner here?” she asked, keenly.

•



"I was led to the font, like a sacrificial victim, in sight of all the nuns clustering behind the bars."

Face p 58.

I should have been silly to return a plain answer to such a question to my jailor, so I evaded it by saying: "I have been very kindly treated, madame, and am probably as happy here as I should be elsewhere."

"That is the proper way of viewing your position," she answered, gently. "Have you yet considered how you should like to devote your whole life to the Church?"

"Oh, madame! I am yet but too young in the faith to have thought about it."

"That is true," she said; "but now that you are one of us, you must not call me madame, but Mother: I am well pleased with the change that has taken place in you, Mercedes. You speak our language easily now; and, since the devil has been cast out of you, you must feel very different."

"Very different, Mother," I replied, with inward bitterness.

"I have written to your father, to tell him of your salvation," she continued—"would you like to write him a few lines yourself?"

"Oh, yes, Mother, if you please," I exclaimed, flushing with pleasure at this unexpected favour.

"Come into my room then; afterwards I will introduce you to your pupils."

I expected that now at last, after having been six months in the convent, I was going to have the opportunity of writing a long letter home to ask my father what were his intentions for the future concerning me; but to my mortification and despair, the Abbess, after setting stationery before me,

dictated what letter I was to write. It was only to be a few lines in Spanish, to show what progress I had made in that tongue, and to say how happy I was to have abandoned my heresy, how thankful I felt to be in a refuge of true faith.

I turned quite pale, and cold, when the Abbess pronounced these words. I saw that I had stepped into a trap: the letter announcing my change of religion would circulate in my home, and, perhaps, its contents would reach Henry Avenant. I simply fingered the pen, and looked up at the Abbess, who perceived my hesitation, but misconstrued the cause of it:

"Are you afraid your Spanish will not be good enough, Mercedes?" she asked.

"Yes, Mother," I said, catching readily at the suggested excuse.

"Never mind that: he will not expect perfection yet awhile."

"But, Mother, my father does not understand Spanish, nor does my mother."

"I daresay one of your sisters or friends will be able to translate for him," replied the Abbess, who evidently imagined that her tongue was currently spoken in all parts of the world.

I had had time for reflection, so I wrote a letter couched in ambiguous phrase:—

"My dear Father,—You will see, from this Spanish note, that I have not wasted my time since I last saw you. I write

to say that the Rev. Mother is very good to me ; and that I am now accustomed to the quiet of convent life. I shall not forsake the religion in which you and my mother caused me to be brought up, and which has now become very dear to me. My love to all at home. Please give me leave to write and receive letters. Your affectionate daughter."

As the Abbess believed that my parents were Roman Catholics, and had brought me up in that creed, which I had subsequently recanted, the allusion to my religion conveyed to her a satisfactory impression. She pointed out two grammatical errors in the letter, but, to my great relief, failed to notice that I had not signed my new name, Mercedes.

"That will do very well," she said, "and now come with me to the schoolroom."

The introduction to my pupils was effected with ceremony enough to have pleased the most fastidious master of etiquette. The girls, two-and-twenty in all, were at work in different class rooms. They rose at sight of the Abbess, and were all presented severally to me, each one making two deep curtseys, one to the Abbess, and one to me, as their names were uttered. In the junior room there was a little girl, so pretty and arch, that I held out my hand to her ; but she gravely lifted it to her lips, having no idea of hand-shaking. Her name was Doña Lucia de Garcirs y Reinos y Porlamientos, and she was the child of a grandee, a very haughty child too, who in a very few days taught me more about armorial quarterings than I had ever learned before. Her elder sister, Doña Carlotta, was in the senior class.

There were six nuns to act as school-mistresses. Three elderly ones, who were fairly educated; and three young ones, two of whom knew little beyond reading, writing, and the history of the saints. The third young nun, Sister Santa Lorenza, was a very handsome and intelligent girl, though prouder, if possible, than any of her pupils. She was the daughter of a poor, but aristocratic officer, and had been admitted to take the veil without a dower, to the express purpose that she might teach. Almost all the nuns who did menial work in the convent—washing, cooking, tilling the kitchen garden—were women of the peasant class, who had been admitted under similar conditions, for the haughty young ladies of rich families, who had entered the convent through disappointed love or other causes, did not push Christian meekness so far as to discharge servants' offices willingly. If, perchance, they might be seen washing greasy dishes, or dabbling in soap-suds, it was generally by the way of self-inflicted penance; though all, except the teachers, cleaned their own cells—when these cells were cleaned at all.

The six teaching nuns were absolved from many of the Carmelite rules. They did not go with bare feet and legs, like Sister Santa Incarnation, but wore shoes and stockings, and changed their linen with suitable frequency. Sister Santa Lorenza was very particular about her appearance; her caps were always spotless, her hands white as milk, and her gown was of fine black cloth. She was the "show" sister of the convent, who used to escort the pupils to the

parlour, when their parents called, or go with them to their homes, when they went out on Sundays. She slept in a cell close to the dormitory of the elder pupils, but it was a cell only in name, being stocked with comfortable furniture, and containing several pretty ornaments, given to her by her pupils. I was removed from my room in the cloisters to a chamber next hers, which overlooked the garden, and two brown-faced country girls, who were novices, acted as our housemaids.


I also from this time attended services twice a day in the chapel, and took my meals with the pupils in the convent refectory. This place for eating was a large hall, wainscoted with oak. On a dias at the further end stood a table, at which the Abbess dined with the Chapter of the Order—six nuns who were addressed as “Mother,” and wore white cuffs to their gowns, and a large cross, in scarlet cloth, on their bosoms. The nuns, ninety in number, occupied two long tables on either side of the hall; and a central table, was reserved for the novices, about thirty in number, some of whom were postulants, who dressed in white or grey, according to their taste or means; whilst others, in black gowns and white merino veils, but without caps, were minor nuns, who had taken as yet but probationary vows. None of the novices had their hair cut.

When all the nuns were assembled in the refectory, chanting grace, the effect was very picturesque; but it was only on Sundays and great festivals, that the school pupils took their meals at the same time as the sisters. On ordinary

days they were called to the refectory half an hour after the sisters had left it ; and they sat with their teachers at the high table. The fare was always good, and the teachers partook of it without any asceticism—the example being set them by the school head-mistress, Mother Santa Ildefonza, who was very stout and somnolent at all times, excepting at meals.

I soon noticed that Sister Santa Lorenza, was also partial to good living. She never inflicted upon herself a penance of any kind, or seemed to think that she required it. Even in chapel her attitude was calm and dignified, rather than devout. When I came to know her better, I found that she never spoke on religious subjects at all : she liked to gossip about the world, and was very fond of hearing me play on the piano—which instrument, by-the-bye, was tuned as soon as I had been appointed to the custody of it. Mother Santa Ildefonza was likewise an easy-going person ; and both she and Sister Santa Lorenza, who was her pet, disliked the stern Abbess, who, on that account probably, seldom showed herself in the school.

I got on very well with my pupils, but there was not much intimacy between us, for they prattled their language so fast that many months elapsed before I could understand half they said. I had to beg them to speak slowly, and this, though it amused them, made confidential intercourse difficult. Besides, I had a great deal to do, for all the girls wanted to learn drawing and music ; and to teach two-and-twenty pupils, conscientiously, was no light matter.



However, time flies quickly when one is well employed; and, sad, as I often felt when my thoughts turned to Henry Avenant, I was consoled by the delusion I cherished that I should not remain in the convent a single day after I had attained my majority. Thus two years glided by, and the day at length came when I completed my twenty-first year, and obtained, as I imagined, the right to claim my freedom.



CHAPTER V.

Sudden death of the Abbess.—A new Abbess is elected.—The strict discipline of the convent gives place to a general laxity.—Sister Santa Incarnation indulges in scent and cigarettes on the sly.—A revelation.

AN awful and unexpected event prevented me from demanding my liberty, as I had intended to do; for, on the very morning of my birthday, the Abbess was found dead in her bed. She had been in weak health a few days previously, but she was not the woman to make any complaint about her sufferings, so her death took everybody by surprise. It caused great excitement; the chapel bell was tolled all day; a message was sent to the Archbishop of Seville; and every tongue in the convent became loosed, as by enchantment. Nuns whom I had never heard speak before, suddenly recovered their suspended faculties of speech and began to babble freely. Their only topic was to conjecture who would be the new Abbess.

As the weather was very hot, the Abbess was buried twenty-four hours after her death, in the choir of the chapel. It was a gloomy place this chapel. The images of saints, and of the crucified Saviour, which adorned it, were all disfigured by those ghastly wounds in which the Spanish

imagination revels ; but, in some of the lateral chapels there were splendid marble monuments, covering the vaults of families who had paid very dearly for the privilege of having their dead laid in the sacred ground. The burial place of the nuns was outside the chapel, and nothing but a plain mound of earth, and a black wooden cross, marked each sepulchre.

I was, perhaps, the only person in the convent who mourned, with any sincerity, for the Abbess's death. She had been more respected than liked, and the vacillation which had marked her rule from the time when she had tried to curb the excesses which she had at first excited, had given offence to the austerer nuns without pleasing the others, who still found her rule hard. But to me she had been kind, in her cold way, and I grieved that she had died before I could express my gratitude to her.

For some months I had slipped, informally, into the position of organist, so that it was I who played at the funeral. The *Pie Jesu* and the *Dies iræ* were beautifully sung, for long practice had made the nuns nearly perfect in their chants, though few of them knew any music. The Archbishop, with his golden mitre, cope, and pastoral staff, officiated in chief and pronounced the absolution. When he had made the sign of the cross over the open grave all the nuns, with their veils drawn, passed through the gate in their grating, into the choir, and filed round the grave to scatter holy water with an asperges brush, chanting a mournful requiem, without music, as they did so. At the

conclusion of the service I ventured to play the Dead March in *Saul*. Nobody had ever heard it before; and, I, of course, prudently refrained from stating who the composer of it was.

The Chapter for the election of the new Abbess was held on the day after the funeral. The voters were the six Mothers of the Order, the Archbishop, who had two votes—his own and the King's proxy—besides a casting vote, in case the suffrages were equally divided, and two noblemen, a Duke and a Marquis, as representatives of two families who had founded the convent. Sister Santa Lorenza, who was now very friendly with me, showed great excitement about the election, and informed me that there were already two factions at work, one in favour of the good-natured Mother Santa Ildefonza, the other in behalf of Mother Santa Barbara, an old nun with a reputation for extreme sanctity. But it seemed that the election practically rested with the Archbishop, who, unless the six Mothers could agree about electing a candidate by acclamation, had the power to adjourn from week to week, till by intrigues or some other means he had secured a majority for his own nominee; "and the Archbishop generally does what the Duchess of Onorios tells him," added Sister Lorenza, hopefully.

The Duchess was mother of one of our pupils, and I knew that the sister often went to her palace: "Do you think there is any chance of Mother Santa Ildefonza being elected?" I asked.

"I have used all my influence for her," answered Lorenza.

"But they may perhaps elect you, sister?"

"They might do so," she replied calmly, "but I don't think my turn has come yet."

It gave me considerable pleasure to hear that Mother Santa Ildefonza stood so good a chance, for I had not conceived any idea that such promotion was possible. The fat and sleepy lady, who in all things suffered herself to be ruled by Lorenza, or by me, or by anybody else who could save her trouble, seemed to be the last person fitted for a post of authority: however, the Chapter elected her, and promoted Sister Santa Lorenza to the place in the Chapter which she vacated. So now I had to address Lorenza, who was only twenty-five, as "Mother." She bore her honours with easy dignity, as if she had anticipated them: and in her new position displayed all the tact and cool craft of an ambitious mind—so crafty was she, indeed, that I, who knew her so well, was a long time in detecting her. She became head-mistress of the school, adviser-general of the new Abbess, and was regarded by everybody as pre-elected to be next Abbess.

As I had been a favourite of Mother Santa Ildefonza, I lost no time in making her acquainted with the circumstances under which I had entered the convent, and expressed my wish to be set at liberty. She listened with apparent amazement to my story, and said what a good child I must be to have never breathed a word about this to

her or anybody else. She promised that she would at once write to my father, and Lorenza came to me on the following day, and confirmed these assurances in the most affectionate tone.

I may as well state that all these assurances were untruths. For a whole year Lorenza and the Abbess beguiled me with every kind of delusive hope; now affirming that my father had written to say he would come and fetch me in a month, now announcing that my father was ill, and had been obliged to delay his journey for a fortnight, a month, six weeks, and so on. And these falsehoods were told with such unblushing simplicity, that for a long while I put full trust in them.

Meantime the convent under its new Abbess, had become quite an altered place. In these institutions the monotony of existence disposes the inmates to welcome any sort of change as a relief. After laxity, strictness is welcome; after strictness, a return to easy rules is a boon. The rule of silence, which is always the hardest for women living together in numbers to observe, was the first set aside; and as soon as the nuns began to chatter unrestrained, they fell to complaining of their lot. In some the appetite for good food, long curbed, broke loose; others who had been gently nurtured, sighed for clean linen and perfumed soap. The sheetless beds, the rising for matins in the dead of night, the weary penances, the tedious hours of idleness, the wretched seclusion from all news of the outer world, were all in time inveighed against; and some of the sisters who

had been most distinguished before for their austerities, evinced the inconsistency of weak minds, by flying to the opposite extreme.

The new Abbess, who had never martyred her flesh, was only too glad, now that she dined in the refectory with the Chapter and the nuns, to order succulent dinners to be served there—fish, eggs, butter, poultry and game, were seen once more on the boards; lemonade took the place of water; those who cared for wine had it “by doctor’s orders,” as it was said. For now a fashionable medical man paid a daily visit to the place (not a doctor had ever come in during the late Abbess’s reign), and this amiable elderly gentleman, who brought all the gossip of Seville and Madrid with him, became the cause of a pleasing return to coquetry. Many of the young nuns grew careful about their looks. They washed; they put on shoes and stockings; the unsightly poke-cap was altered so as not to go beyond the brow; and, being starched into a kind of Mary Stuart peak in front, was rendered, thanks to the graceful draping of the veil, quite a comely head-dress. Then some of the nuns discovered that, by their statutes, they ought to wear white gowns with black cuffs, and black chasubles with scarlet crosses. The wholly black gowns, were an economical, modern innovation, which the sisters who belonged to rich families hastened to discard, and of course their example was promptly followed. A few went so far as to wear girdles of tawny silk, to look like rope, with rosaries of carved ivory with golden crucifixes.

But, perhaps the greatest of all the changes was the liberty of going out, which many of the sisters began to clamour for. Under the late Abbess, the Carmelites only went out, as a general rule (from which only the school teachers were exempted), to watch beside the bodies of the dead belonging to certain great families numbered among the benefactors of the convent; but now they were continually going out to tend the sick in the private houses of the most ordinary people who chose to pay for their services. The convent had recently obtained such a reputation for sanctity, that for a time it became quite the fashion to send for Carmelite nurses; and those who went forth on these pious missions, often brought back novels and newspapers with them, so that the cloisters and garden, instead of being oppressive from their saintly silence, re-sounded with the hum of scandalmongering and frivolous romancing, at all hours of the day.

I have often thought that if I had not aroused Mother Santa Lorenza's watchfulness by my petitions for liberty, I might easily have escaped at this time; but, believing the fables that were told me, I made no attempt to fly, for, as I had no money or friends in Spain, I should not have known where to go. Lorenza used to speak to me every day, and was always so friendly as to disarm suspicion. I was not aware then of her principal reason for seeking to detain me in the convent; but there was a second reason, which she laughingly confessed, saying that the school would never be able to do without me. I had, indeed, exerted myself to

such good purpose in my teaching, that it had got noised among the families in Seville that there was "a first-class English governess" at the Carmelites ; so that in the course of a couple of years the number of pupils at the convent had more than doubled.

Being now obliged to have an assistant for the music lessons, I had chosen Sister Santa Incarnation, who could strum, if not play, fairly on the piano. But, dear me, what a changed creature this girl had become ! Instead of the meek, cooing, dove, with naked feet and a dusty face, who had talked of dying for me, I now had a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked companion, who had cambric pocket-handkerchiefs with violet scent on them, and smoked cigarettes on the sly. In the old days the sister had refused to disclose anything about her past history ; but she now told me that her father was an English wine-merchant in Seville, and that he had been bitterly opposed to her taking the veil. She had betaken herself to the convent in a pet because she had been thwarted in a love affair, and had often thought herself a silly girl for her pains. She was reconciled to her fate, however, since the new Abbess's accession, and every time she was sent out with pupils she contrived to pay a visit to her father's house, and returned thence with volumes of Tauchnitz's collection of novels in her pockets. These, and occasional English newspapers—which were a great treat—she used to lend to me, for she loved me as much as she could love anybody ; and she insisted that I should call her "Natty,"—an abbreviation of her religious name—which was

more tuneful, she declared, than "that horrible Spanish jargon."

I need not say that there remained in the convent a nucleus of nuns who were righteously opposed to the new, licentious order of things. Some reproved it, because, weighed down by sorrow or remorse, they were really anxious to lead lives of expiation; others were against it from mere contrariness. Lorenza, like a cunning girl, made believe to share the sentiments of these malcontents. Though she privately encouraged the Abbess to make things pleasant all round, she became somewhat stricter than before in her own conduct, and gave the malcontents to understand that she disapproved a great deal of what went on, but was powerless to prevent it. This was doubly clever, because, in the first place, it exonerated her from all suspicion of governing the Abbess; and in the next, it prepared the minds of the orderly nuns to look forward to her accession as destined to inaugurate a new era of propriety. Mother Santa Lorenza had shrewdly calculated that after the late Abbess's rule a reaction must set in; but that when the period of licentiousness had reached certain limits, the convent would be ready for a new spell of despotic government. Meanwhile the lax times would have swept certain abuses away, so that Lorenza herself would be able to rule under judicious system, which would be neither too severe nor too loose.

It was Natty who first opened my eyes to Santa Lorenza's duplicity, for this maiden had become worldly-wise since she had ceased to keep her eyes shut like a new-born kitten.

One evening as I was sitting in her room, as I often did, to chat for an hour after the pupils had gone to bed, she coolly



lit a cigarette, and throwing herself on her couch in the attitude of a sultana on her divan, said abruptly :

“What a silly girl you are, Mercy, to believe all that Mother Lorenza tells you. She never intends you to go out of here.”

“What do you mean, Natty ?” I asked, starting as if she had struck me.

“Why your father is paying a hundred pounds a year for you here, and he has promised to give the convent a thousand pounds if you take the veil. You are therefore a girl

well worth keeping, considering how useful you are in the school."

"Who told you all that?" I faltered, while my hands, becoming nerveless, let fall a book I had been holding.

"I was in the Abbess's room when your father came. She told you that a priest had acted as interpreter; but that is untrue. It was I who translated everything."

"Oh, Natty, and you have kept the truth from me all this time?"

"Never mind, dear, don't be angry with me. I am not sure that I ought to have told you now," exclaimed Natty, and throwing her cigarette away, she came and flung her arms round me. "I acted for the best, Mercy, dear. I was put under a dreadful oath not to tell; but I hate Mother Lorenza for her falseness to you, and so I thought you had better hear the truth."

"Tell me all that happened, Natty," I said, holding her hands; "conceal nothing; you don't know how important it all is to me."

"Yes; I will tell you everything, dear," she said, "but don't you fret. If you see they won't let you go, just outwit them by pretending you mean to take the veil. You will have more liberty as a postulant, for they won't suspect you, and you may find a chance of running away. But, if things come to the worst, you won't be so very unhappy as a nun, for we lead jolly lives now."

Natty then told me a story which made my blood curdle as I sat listening in speechless wonder and misery:

"Your father doesn't like you, dear," she said. "No father ever hated a daughter as he does you. He made the Abbess believe that you were the wickedest girl that ever breathed; he was ashamed even to mention half you had done. But he said that he believed you were growing mad, because your mother had died mad, and he wished you to be confined as a lunatic. But if you got cured, he would give a thousand pounds when you took the veil, as he was convinced a nun's life was the only thing for you."

This narrative quite stupefied me. I was at a loss to conceive how my father could harbour such implacable fury against me, simply because I had formed an attachment which he disapproved. It was also a mystery how he could afford to pay a thousand pounds to get me shut up, for I did not suppose him rich enough to dispose of such a sum. The whole thing was shocking and terrible in the last degree; and the only charitable construction I could put on the matter was that my father himself must be afflicted with insanity.

I controlled my feelings in Natty's presence, but they overcame me when I returned to my room—not to sleep, but to throw myself on my bed and moan. I understood now, and, but too well, why Henry Avenant had not turned back to give me one cheering look on the day when he had walked out of my father's house. He had been told that I was in danger of becoming *mad*, and had gone away under the impression that he ought to think no more about me. But what had he done since? Perhaps he had

quite blotted me out of his memory and had got married to another.

“Oh, God!” I cried, in the paroxysm of my agony, “what have I done to deserve all this?”

When I arose in the morning, one purpose was immutably fixed in my mind—I resolved to watch for every chance of escaping from the convent, and to seize the first that came.



CHAPTER VI.

I study the various methods of escaping from the convent.—I become a postulant.—Natty Hartridge (Sister Santa Incarnation) favours me with her confidences.—The new Abbess is taken ill and dies.—The crippled daughter of a wealthy grandee is chosen to succeed her.—Squabbles in the convent.

It looked more easy to escape from the convent than it really was—at least for a girl. An active boy could easily have clambered over the garden walls by help of the trees, whose branches overhung them; or he might have made a rush past the portress at the cloister gate, and then have snatched the key from the portress at the outer gate. Both portresses were old women, and not particularly active; but they were sharp duennas, and their vigilance, so far as I could see, was not often at fault. Whenever any nun or pupil went out of the convent, she was escorted as far as the outer gate by one of the Mothers, and without such escort none were allowed to pass. When visitors came, the outer portress rang a bell to apprise the inner one, who, in her turn, rang to summon the receiving nun on duty for the day. Before the visitors had half-crossed the first court-yard, the receiving nun would be standing on the steps of the second lodge, to

conduct them to the parlour. It rarely happened that visitors penetrated beyond the second gate. Those who came to see the nuns were separated from them by a grating in a special parlour, while the pupils were only to be seen in a room where Mother Santa Lorenza generally did the honours.

When I had considered all the ways of escape, and had satisfied myself that I should only be able to get out by stratagem, unless some hazard befriended me, I combated Mother Lorenza's duplicity by an equal deceitfulness, and told her that since my parents seemed unwilling to remove me, and since I had no private fortune of my own to enable me to shift without them, I should like to become a nun, provided the Chapter would receive me without a dower. Mother Lorenza looked astonished; but my artful manner of proffering my petition, as if it were a favour that I begged, convinced her that I had heard nothing of the dower which my father had promised. She was at some pains to conceal her gratification; and, kissing me with the utmost affection, vowed that I was taking the true road to happiness in this world and the next. "Oh, you false girl!" I thought.

Why did I not rather trust to hazard—that is to God? How often, while praying and professing to throw ourselves on God's mercy, we have recourse to idle artifices of our own, and expect a blessing on them. My untruthfulness immediately met with its punishment. I had forgotten that, as a postulant, I should be obliged to put off my ordinary

attire, and wear a white or grey robe. Not only were my dresses, jackets, and hats taken from me, but I had to give up my watch and chain, and some other little trinkets on



which I had reckoned that I might be able to raise money, if I succeeded in escaping.

It was no longer possible now that I could avail myself of any happy chance, such as an open gate, in the twilight of a winter evening, for my costume would immediately have

arrested attention in the streets. Nobody pays much attention to a nun ; but a postulant is never seen out of doors in her robe, for, if she leaves the convent, she practically ceases to be a postulant, and must go out in her ordinary clothes. The thing I wore was much like a white dressing-gown, with a black hood, girdle, and cuffs ; in the garden I had a veil, which I draped round my head like a mantilla. No alteration was made in my diet ; but I had to attend three chapel services a day instead of two ; to go to confession every week instead of every month ; and to keep a vigil of three hours from midnight, at the Lady Altar, once a fortnight.

A positive despair fell upon me when I saw how, by my wickedness, I had tightened my bonds instead of loosening them ; but I had to conceal my wretchedness, lest I should make my position worse. I was growing so hardened, that I resolved to take the veil, if I should not have escaped when my time came for doing so—anything, anything to recover my liberty. The vows I was made to swear, the rites I performed, had no more sanctity in my eyes. The convent was to me a prison, and all who held authority in it were odious as gaolers.

I had been three years and two months in the nunnery when I became a postulant, and the next twelvemonth passed without bringing any incident of note. The number of our school-pupils rose to seventy, which was as many as we could receive, so that a question was mooted of building a new wing to the school. A great many new postulants, of

by no means saintly disposition, also came, attracted by the new renown of the house as a place of gay living. Two classes of gentlewomen furnish the bulk of recruits to Spanish conventual houses—those who have undergone some great sorrow, and those whose parents are not rich enough to give them a large dower to marry well. When a Spanish gentleman of position has several daughters he piously devotes the ugliest to the service of the church; and this young lady, acquiescing in the arrangement as a social necessity, looks about her for a convent that shall be at once aristocratic and of easy rule.

But the combination of these two desiderata is often difficult. The Benedictines, Augustines, and Calced Carmelites have easy rules, but are accounted second-rate orders, unless they become fashionable occasionally, owing to some accidental circumstance. The Redemptorines are very aristocratic, but their iron rule, which never bends, attracts few. The Discalced Carmelites are also aristocratic, and *their* rule is supposed not to bend either; but as they are more numerous than the Redemptorines, having a larger house, richer endowments, and receiving pupils (which the Redemptorines do not), they are more liable to be influenced by the character of the Superior, whose election, as we have seen, depends on intrigues out of doors. Mother Santa Idelfonza, having allowed the reins to flow out of her hands, her convent, while retaining its prestige as a place of nominally severe rule, offered enticements as an abode of delights to those who had got an inkling of

what was the real state of things therein. Some of the new postulants who came to us were very giddy girls indeed, and their conversation completed the demoralisation of the weaker nuns, such as Sister Santa Incarnation.

I dared not trust Natty with any confidence about my plans. Knowing her to be so foolish, I had reason to fear that if some new change occurred in her religious sentiments, she might relieve her conscience by confessing that she advised me to escape. I could not rely on her unselfishness either, for though she appeared to be very fond of me, it was probable that she valued my companionship more than my interests, and would not be disposed to connive too actively in a step which would deprive her of the only English friend she had in the convent. This is what I thought, and I acted in consequence; but Natty tried very hard to penetrate my intentions, and often hinted that I might depend upon her aid in any scheme I formed, for she would be so glad to spite Mother Santa Lorenza. Once, when we were alone in the school-room, and I was retouching one of the pupils' sketches, she said to me, in her abrupt, flighty way :

" I don't believe you are really a Catholic, Mercy."

" What makes you think that?" I asked, without looking up.

" Why, I have heard you sing English hymns in your room alone."

" Isn't that allowed?" I said, colouring a little.

" Of course it isn't; how can you suppose it is? It

doesn't matter to me, though ; so you needn't look frightened."

" I am not frightened. Do you consider yourself a good Catholic, Natty ?

" Oh, I'm anything you please—but principally bored to death with this place," she answered, yawning. " If a fairy would transport me from Seville, and place me in the middle of England, with a nice dress on, I believe I'd marry the first good-looking fellow who offered himself."

" Well, I'm sure !" Those are pretty sentiments for a young lady, I remarked, laughing.

" I should, though," replied Natty, with a wag of the head.

" But if that be the case, why don't you ask your father to take you away ?—judging by all you have told me, he would do so with pleasure."

" Yes ; but I should have to acknowledge at home that I had been a goose, and that wouldn't do at all. You see they all pity me at home, and look upon me as the saint of the family. I pull long faces every time I go there ! "

" Even when you ask for novels ? "

" Oh—I say the novels are for you. I've told my father all about you, and what a nice girl you are ; but I pretend to be grieved over your stubbornness, and say I'm making great efforts to induce you to take the veil. I'm an awful liar, Mercy."

" So it seems. Your father is very good to you, is he not ? You ought to be fond of him."

"So I am—as fond as I can be of anybody; but that sort of fondness doesn't count for much. I believe I could frantically love a husband, if he was kind to me."

"It appears to me that your father ought never to have let you enter a convent."

"He violently opposed it, for he is a Protestant, you know, but it was precisely this that made me persevere. I led them all a fearful life at home until I had carried my point; it would have served me right if my mother had whipped me till I bled. If they had opposed me less, though, I should probably have got tired of my fancy."

"But now, supposing your father were to come and offer to take you away to England, and settle you pleasantly, with a chance of being married, wouldn't you consent?"

"He might go down on his bended knees and I wouldn't do it," she replied, doggedly; "but I'll tell you what (and she giggled outright), if a handsome young fellow—tall, with black moustaches—were to begin shying notes for me over the convent wall, and plan an elopement in a post-chaise, I'd be off like a shot, for there would be some fun in that."

After this brave speech, Natty tripped off to the kitchen to see what there was for dinner, for she now took the liveliest interest in her meals.

I had my reason for questioning Natty about her father; for, having learned that he was a staunch Protestant, I had made up my mind that if I escaped I would go to him and

ask him to assist me in reaching England. But weeks and months passed without bringing me a single chance of flight, though I was unceasingly on the watch, and had become so desperate that if I could have found the portress at the inner gate off her post, I should, on certain days, have risked the attempt to get through the outer gate, even by violence. Thus another year went by; and the first period of my probation being over, I took vows of my obedience, became a novice, and wore a black gown with white cuffs, instead of a white one with black cuffs. It was at about this time that the Abbess fell ill of dropsy, and it was foreseen from the first that she would not recover. So once more all the excitement of an impending election began, and everybody looked to Mother Santa Lorenza as the future mistress of the convent.

During the two months of the Abbess's lingering illness, however, Lorenza withdrew herself from all interference with the management of any department, except the school. She was too clever to risk a particle of her popularity by a premature assumption of authority; and studied rather to win golden opinions of her gracious sweetness towards everybody, myself included. Unfortunately for Mother Santa Lorenza, she was fated to experience the fickleness of princely patronage. Her friend, the Duchess d'Onorios, was just then arranging a match for her eldest daughter, Lorenza's former pupil, with the eldest son of the very wealthy Duke de Valdabrevas. This grandee had a daughter, a cripple, who was a Carmelite in the convent of Burgos,

and her father begged the Duchess d'Onorios's influence to get her elected Abbess of the convent at Seville.

Against such a request the claims of Lorenza, a poor officer's child, could not weigh a feather ; and so, when the Chapter was convoked, the Archbishop of Seville, without a word of previous warning to Lorenza, proposed the name of Doña Maria Christina de Valdabrevas—in religion Sister Santa Josefa—and having delivered a feeling panegyric on her virtues, her wealth, and her family connections, secured her election without trouble. Afterwards he drew the astounded Lorenza aside, and promised that he would give her his vote at the next election of a Prioress to the Carmelite convent at Valladolid, “which was *likely* to occur before *many years* elapsed.” This was like trifling with a child, and Lorenza favoured him with a look which must have warned His Grace that he had aroused a devil. The mortification to Mother Santa Lorenza's pride was, indeed, such as she could hardly bear ; she came out of the Chapter-room pale as a statute. Lucky for her was it, then, that she had given herself no airs during the late Abbess's reign, for she had thus made no enemies, and most of the nuns were inclined to sympathise with her disappointment, rather than sneer at it.

Much as Mother Lorenza had wronged me, I felt for her, too ; but I knew that any expression of condolence would be gall to her haughty spirit, so I forbore to appear conscious of her having experienced any trouble, and treated her in my usual manner. Apart from my personal feelings about

her, I really thought that the Archbishop and Chapter had blundered in not electing Lorenza. I have said that she was beautiful ; she possessed, indeed, a queenly mien and carriage. Her voice was sweet, her manners, when she wished to please, were charming, and at all times they were full of dignity. She was just the woman to make a perfect Abbess, for her very duplicity was of the kind which passes for diplomacy in high functions. To one, gifted and ambitious as she was, the Archbishop's offer of a transfer to Valladolid must have seemed a mockery, for to be Prioress of a small establishment, with thirty nuns, was a very different thing to ruling in one of the largest and most renowned convents in princely Seville. Mother Santa Lorenza proved her strong qualities by the fortitude with which she bore her anguish after the first surprise of it was passed. She discharged her duties with her habitual calmness, and waited patiently for the arrival of the new Abbess, having, doubtless, privately resolved to shape her own future conduct according to what she should discern of this lady's character.

We had been told that our new Abbess was a cripple ; but she was, in fact, nearly a hunchback—a little, brown-faced, dwarfed creature of twenty-five with large wistful eyes, and an expression, turn by turn, piteous and over-solemn. She made her entry into the convent with some state, all the nuns being drawn up in the outer yard to receive her ; but the scene was rendered almost ludicrous, for the Abbess, thinking she must conform to the strict

rules, had removed her shoes and stockings in the carriage that had deposited her at the door, and, being unaccustomed to go barefoot, pulled comical faces as she limped across the gravel of the yard. Many of the nuns seeing this tried to cloak their own shoes under their gowns, but the Abbess had espied their shod feet, and as soon as she was in her room lost no time in drawing her stockings out of her bag and putting them on again. She never went barefoot afterwards.

I had hoped, longingly, that the new Abbess might be a person of whom I could make a confidante, but it soon became evident to us all that Mother Santa Josefa was quite unsuited to her place. She was too young, and her infirmities laid her under a cruel disadvantage; for an Abbess who cannot endure the physical hardships which the rules of her Order inculcate, is like a general who cannot sit on horseback. The Duke de Valdabrevas's daughter had been all her life nursed and fondled on account of her weak health; in her convent at Burgos she had been flattered owing to her father's influence, nobility, and wealth; so that, although her nature was kindly, she was somewhat silly, capricious, and exacting of adulation. Having fine eyes, she thought herself pretty; and having been told by a gipsy, when she was a little girl, that she would become a saint, she was inclined to think that she had been elected Abbess on account of her surpassing virtues. It had long been her darling wish to found an Order of her own; but now she began to wonder whether she could not fulfill her

destiny as a saint by subjecting her nuns to novel regulations, and making them do something or other which no nuns had ever done before. She was in doubt as to whether she should employ them in embroidering the whole contents of the missal on a set of vestments for the Pope ; or make them build a chapel with their own hands ; or manufacture some new curative liqueur ; or call upon them all to assist her in composing a religious epic, which should eclipse the "Paradise Lost" of the heretic Milton. Her schemes varied with the changes of the moon, and by these means she had in six months set the whole convent at sixes and sevens.

Without intending it, I got involved in the squabbles which arose between the nuns and their Superior, and the anarchy which resulted came to me as a blessing in disguise, for it enabled me to effect my escape at a time when I was beginning to lose all hope and courage.



CHAPTER VII.

General revolt in the convent.—The pupils join in it.—The Abbess's abdication is insisted on.—I am sent on a mission to the Archbishop, and profit by it to make my escape.—I hasten to Natty Hartridge's father and implore his assistance.—He takes me to England.

THOSE who talk of conventual peace must reflect that it is not enough to shut up several scores of idle women within four walls to secure the elements of quietude. In convents, as elsewhere, peace can only be made to reign by good government. The Archbishop of Seville and the Duchess d'Onorios had possibly hoped that the new Abbess would take Mother Santa Lorenzo as her chief adviser, and had she done this (which we all expected she would do), it would have gone well with her ; for Lorenza was too shrewd not to have grasped the realities of power if they had been put in her way.

But the Abbess had brought with her two nuns from Burgos, who were her dependents and favourites, and who altogether managed her. Sister Santa Rosa was a poor cousin of the Abbess, and had been her chief friend and playmate from childhood ; Sister Santa Ursula, was a strapping country wench, who was the Abbess's foster-sister, had afterwards become her servant, and had taken the veil so as

not to be separated from her. Sister Santa Rosa—a sour-visaged sycophant—acted as the Abbess's secretary, companion, and counsellor ; Sister Santa Ursula was practically her maid ; but she also arrogated to herself the office of housekeeper, superintending the kitchen, the laundry, the linen-room, giving orders to everybody in the Abbess's name, and roughly wounding the pride of many nuns who were quite as high-born as the Abbess herself.


Disobedience followed ; many sisters refused to obey orders that were not brought by the Abbess in person ; and, as it hurt the poor, lame lady to walk much, she used to be seen hobbling about, her face distorted by pain and anger, and her voice raised to the shrillest pitch. Then cooks and laundrymaids were turned out of their situations and replaced by others who were willing to toady the arrogant Ursula. Alterations were made in the dinners, which drove some of the nuns to behave like schoolgirls. A party of them, with their veils down, broke into the kitchen, and ransacked the larder ; others ravaged the garden of its fruit. The Abbess appealed to the Archbishop, who summoned all the nuns into the refectory and gave them a lecture ; but a fit of coughing exploded in a corner of the room, and spreading from bench to bench, soon drowned His Grace's words, and forced him to retire in a dudgeon.

Natty was, of course, one of the ringleaders of mischief. She thought it excellent fun ; and, forgetting her former hatred of Mother Santa Lorenza, echoed the general opinion that the latter had been shamefully treated and ought to be

made Abbess. It must have been balm to Lorenza's bleeding vanity to see how all turned to her now and treated her with lavish respect on purpose to spite the Abbess. But Lorenza behaved with great propriety, for, though she did nothing to check the disorder, she did not seek to foment it. She simply allowed events to work for her, and attended to her own business, until one day Ursula came to give her an order in the schoolroom, when she quietly dismissed the classes and resigned her post as head-mistress. Natty and several of the other teachers (for there were now ten) followed her example, so that I and an old sister, called Juana, remained alone in charge of seventy pupils, who all turned mutinous, and declared they would not learn their lessons unless Mother Santa Lorenza was reinstalled and apologised to.

This sudden blow (which must have been coolly premeditated by Lorenza) gave the finishing stroke to the Abbess's authority. She came running into the schoolroom attended by Sisters Rosa and Ursula, and in a voice quivering with passion ordered the pupils to resume their tasks. I did my utmost to help her in obtaining quiet, but it was of no use. Some of the elder pupils cried sarcastically, as they fluttered their fans, "Appoint your maid, Ursula, to be our Mother, if she can read;" at which all the others laughed.

Doña Lucia de Porlamientos, who was now a fine girl of sixteen, on the point of leaving the school, bore a family grudge against the Abbess—for their two fathers were





"Some of the elder pupils cried sarcastically, as they fluttered their fans, 'Appoint your maid, Ursula, to be our Mother, if she can read.'"

Fr. co p. 91.

political enemies—so she exhaled her rancour by crying impetuously : “You Valdabrevas can only rule by gathering low creatures round you like that Ursula.”

‘ I ordered the saucy girl to her room for this speech, but the Abbess shrieked to her : “You shall leave the school this day !”

“That I will,” laughed Doña Lucia, with an ironical courtesy, “and I’ll tell all the world that the Carmelites of Seville have now got a crooked stick to rule them.”

Natty was very cross with me because I supported the Abbess in this crisis ; but I had no inducement to espouse Lorenza’s quarrel, since she had not helped me in the days when she had power to do so. I was actuated in my present conduct entirely by what I believed to be my own interests, for it seemed to me that my best chance of making a powerful friend lay in standing by the Abbess when everybody else forsook her. In this I was not wrong, for my attitude virtually saved the school from dissolution. As it was, thirty of the pupils were removed within a week ; several of the new postulants went away, too ; and about twenty of the devouter nuns, who were afflicted by the prevailing misrule, petitioned the Abbess and Chapter that they might be transferred to other Carmelite convents.

Infuriated and vindictive, the Abbess had several long conferences with the Archbishop, and planned a vengeance on her rebellious nuns : but meanwhile she took me into great favour, and made me directress of the school, undertaking that she and Sister Rosa would each come and hold a

class twice a day. She also begged me to induce Sister Santa Incarnation to return; and this I easily did, for, once the excitement of mutiny was past, Natty began to pine after my companionship; besides, Lorenza advised her to go back to her work, as she did not want the school to fall entirely into the hands of the Abbess's partisans. Lorenza, now that she had overtly quarrelled with the Abbess, had her own plans of revenge, too.

As the Abbess and Sister Rosa were both much more learned than Lorenza, whose accomplishments were showy rather than profound, the pupils might have derived some benefit from their teaching, if only peace could have been restored; but this was not to be. The Abbess's plan for quelling the revolt was to exile forty of the refractory nuns to other convents, and to fill their places with well-disposed sisters taken from those convents. But her design leaked out through some imprudent threats uttered by Ursula, and all the nuns who felt themselves to be in danger entered into a league, and vowed they would not go.

Now, it often happens that a nun is sent for misconduct, or some other cause, from one convent to another; and the order to depart is never resisted. But for an impotent Abbess to attempt exiling a large body of nuns who have derided her authority is absurd, for if they will not yield to moral force there is none other to compel them. An Abbess cannot call in her soldiery or the police to enforce her decrees. She can appeal to the Bishop, as our Abbess had done; but His Grace of Seville had been coughed down, and

was not likely to obtain a more patient hearing if he tried again.

So far from being afraid, the mutinous nuns were emboldened from knowing that society in Seville were beginning to talk of the state of things at the Carmelites as a grave scandal, and to lay all the blame of it upon the Abbess and upon the Archbishop, who had caused her to be elected : so they held a meeting in the refectory and signed a petition to the Chapter, praying that it would request the Abbess to resign her office. At this critical juncture, the Chapter—the members of which were mostly puzzled-headed old women—rallied round Mother Santa Lorenza, whose energy was alone equal to coping with the situation. Lorenza accepted her mission as revolutionary heroine, got the Chapter to pass a resolution in approval of the petition, and waited upon the Abbess herself with a written minute of the proceedings.

It was on a morning in August that the Abbess was thus called upon to abdicate. I had then been a little more than five years in the convent, and very far was I from imagining that the day of my freedom had at last dawned. The Abbess and I were alone in one of the class-rooms, talking about the day's lessons, when Mother Santa Lorenza slowly walked in, made a cold obeisance to her superior, and presented her paper.

I think I see the startled little Abbess now ; the quick flush that mounted to her face ; the toss of her Castilian head ; the quivering of her indignant lips ! "Th's to me?"

she cried. "Where are Sisters Rosa and Ursula? I must see them at once."

"By order of the Chapter, Rosa and Ursula have both been locked up in their cells," said Lorenza, in a freezing tone. "They will not be released except to leave the convent, and return with you to Burgos."

"What! you have dared to confine them without my leave?" exclaimed the Abbess, aghast.

"I have done my duty, Reverend Mother. They have been your evil counsellors, and perverted your judgment, usurping authority, and bringing your own into contempt. Your council should have been the Chapter, which you have never deigned to consult; but let me tell you now that we have duties towards our Order as well as you. The Carmelites existed before your time, and will flourish long after you; so the dignity of the convent cannot be suffered to go in peril through your incompetency. Since you have shown yourself unable to rule we take the government out of your hands as if you were ill or mad."

"Insolent woman!" shrieked the poor little hunchback, stamping her foot with fright and fury; "I will punish you all for your disobedience! I will appeal to the Pope!"

"It is we who will appeal to the Pope, Reverend Mother," answered Lorenza, sternly. "If you do not abdicate and retire to Burgos this day we will petition the Pope to depose you; and since the Archbishop seems to favour you, for reasons of his own, a hundred nuns shall carry our petition

publicly through the streets to his palace, so that he shall not dare to deny us justice. We give you six hours for reflection."

Then, turning to me, Lorenza said, "Mercedes, until three o'clock to-day you obey the Abbess, but after that time you will take your orders from the Chapter," and, with another grave inclination of the head, she swept out.

I had been a silent, though not unmoved, witness of this thrilling scene; but when Lorenza had retired, the Abbess clung to me for support, and I had to hold her up in a chair, for she looked ready to faint. It was evident that her rule had come to an end; as a moment's calm reflection must have convinced her that the Archbishop could not side with her against a *pronunciamiento* of the whole convent, headed by the Chapter. But she was too much exasperated to see her position clearly, and only thought, as falling potentates do, of taking vengeance and resisting to the last.

"I must see the Archbishop at once," she gasped; "he went to his country-house yesterday, and it is two leagues from here; but he must come Whom can I send to him?"

"Let me go, Reverend Mother," I said, clutching, breathless, at the chance of liberty that seemed within my reach.

"Yes, you go, Mercedes," exclaimed the poor woman, mistaking my eagerness for zeal on her behalf. "You are a good girl. You were obedient to me when others fell

away ; I can trust you, You must go to Lessina, where the Archbishop's summer palace is. You must tell him that violence has been used—that I am in danger."

"I will tell him what I have just witnessed," I stammered, for I was now panting with agitation lest any obstacle should arise.

"Yes, yes ; tell him how you saw me insulted. He must come at once, and he must telegraph to Rome for a decree dissolving this Chapter. Mind you tell him that. But stay"—and she paused, looking at me—"you can't go out in that attire."

"Let me change clothes with Incarnation," I suggested. "It is important that I should not lose a minute."

"So it is. Call her immediately. Where is she ?"

I ran to the door and called Natty, who was in the next room, and when she had entered I locked the door, so that nobody might intrude upon us. I was fearful at first that she might offer some objection on hearing what was required of her. But she only coloured with astonishment, and favoured me with a private wink as she loosened her girdle. We changed clothes in the Abbess's presence. I donned the white robe, the black chasuble with scarlet cross, the collar of starched lawn falling to the shoulders, and the knotted rope. Then Natty helped me to put on her cap, forehead band, and the veil which amply concealed the length of my hair behind. I squeezed her hand gratefully, and she whispered :

"Keep your veil down in the streets, you are looking

too excited. You will be able to see through the eye-holes."

Whilst I was assuming my travesty, the Abbess had hurriedly written a letter, which she handed me, with two gold pieces.

"This money is to pay for a public carriage," she said; "try and get one that looks fast, and loiter not a minute on the road. Now, put your veil down and come along."

She took me by the hand and led me rapidly from the room. I had a moment's awful uneasiness lest the portress



should have received orders from the Chapter to let nobody pass. Oh, how my heart thumped when we had gone through the first gate! We reached the second lodge, the

postern was opened, and the Abbess patted my shoulder as I crossed the threshold, saying :

“Go, my daughter ; and God be with you !”

I fairly fled when the door closed. I ran until I came to a turning, then darted down a maze of streets, gradually composing my steps and my mind as I went. I remembered that my veil concealed the terrible agitation of my features ; but, knowing so little of Spain, I thought my nun's habit must attract everybody's attention, as it would have done in England. It did attract attention, but only of the most respectful sort, owing to Carmelites being more rarely seen in the streets than other nuns. Men stood aside to let me pass ; a priest lifted his shovel hat to me ; several women



gave me the customary salutation:—"Go with God." So I walked on until I came to a square where a market was being held; here I addressed a fruit woman, and, slightly raising my veil, asked her to direct me towards the Calle Reale, where I knew Natty's father lived.

A few minutes later I reached the door of a house, over which was written in English:—"William Hartridge & Son, Wine Merchants." I entered, and, seeing an elderly gentleman in white clothes and a panama hat, smoking in the courtyard as he read a letter, I lifted my veil entirely and accosted him:—

"Can you tell me if Mr. Hartridge is at home?" I said in English.

"I am Mr. Hartridge," he answered, bowing, and a shade of alarm passed over his features. "Is anything the matter with my daughter?"

"No, Mr. Hartridge; but you must have heard her talk about me. My name is Ada B——, I have been shut up in the Carmelite Convent five years against my will, and I have come to pray and implore you to furnish me with the means of returning to England."

I said all this at a breath, and was so unnerved after making the supplication on which the peace of my whole life thereafter was to depend, that my voice failed me, and I could only clasp my hands with a mute gesture of entreaty. But Mr. Hartridge reassured me in the kindest manner.

"Come in, Miss B——, come into my office," he said,

taking me by the arm. "Of course I will assist you. A plague on those convents. I wish every one of them had been burned in the last revolution."

He led me into his office, and made me take a glass of wine to compose myself, for I was trembling in every limb from an emotion which I could not master, till it settled itself into a hysteric fit of tears. Overwhelmed as I was, however, by a sense of my preservation, I did not forget the poor little Abbess and her message; so, as soon as I grew calm, I told Mr. Hartridge why I had been sent out of the convent, and showing him the letter for the Archbishop, and the money, asked him whether he could get the letter conveyed to its destination without the Archbishop learning that it had come from his office. He promised to attend to the matter at once, and went out to order one of his clerks to go to Lessina and deliver the letter at the Archbishop's palace, without a word. When he returned, he sat down beside me and said:—

"Now, then, tell me all about yourself, Miss B——, and be sure you shall return to England at once: so you need not make yourself unhappy."

Mr. Hartridge listened with great attention to the story I unfolded. He was a very business-like man, with a shrewd face, and no little sagacity in seizing upon the salient points of a narrative. From the outset I felt him to be my friend, for his Protestantism was of such a solid sort, that he hated the whole race of nuns, and he did not attempt to conceal his sorrow that his daughter "Jenny" (for so he called

Natty) had "made a fool of herself" by taking the veil. I put gladness into his heart by giving a new insight into Natty's character, and stating my opinion, that, if he managed her well, with a little finessing he might easily coax her out of the nunnery.

"Well, Miss B——," he said, as I concluded, "your case is to me a very mysterious one. If your father was not insane when he shut you up, he must have been actuated by some pecuniary motive of which you are ignorant. You say that he married twice; are you his only child by the first marriage?"

"Yes; my mother died eighteen months after her marriage."

"And you cannot say whether she left any property of her own?"

"None that I ever heard of."

"H'm, we shall have to find that out. I will give you the address of a solicitor, who will help to make the matter clear."

Then Mr. Hartridge drew out his watch, and with a look and manner which were so English—and consequently so fraught with touching recollections to me after all I suffered—"There's an express starts for Madrid at twelve forty-five, so I'll just take you up-stairs and introduce you to my wife and my youngest daughter, Alice, and then we will start for England together."

"Oh, Mr. Hartridge, I cannot ask you to put yourself to such trouble as that," I exclaimed, gratefully.

"It will be no trouble, Miss B——," he said, as if a journey which would have harassed a Spaniard with weeks of thought and preparation, was to him a mere affair of getting into a railway carriage; "I often have to go to England on business, and I can make business for such an affair as the present. But I dare say you would like to change your clothes." (He cast a doubtful look at my garments. I did so, too, and we both smiled.) "Alice, who is about your age, will be able to give you an outfit. She will enjoy the romance of the thing. . . ."

"How can I ever thank you sufficiently for your kindness, Mr. Hartridge?" I said, with swimming eyes, as I held out a hand to him.

"Tut, tut, my dear child, I am only too glad to serve you," he said. "Perhaps you will have helped to restore poor Jenny to us. Now, while you are up-stairs, I'll get my portmanteau packed."

Mr. Hartridge was as good as his word. At a quarter to one, more than five hours before the delay allowed to the Abbess by her insurgent nuns had expired, I was on my way to England, with Mr. Hartridge seated opposite me in a first-class railway-carriage consulting Bradshaw.

CHAPTER VIII.

I arrive at London with Mr. Hartridge.—I make the discovery that my crue parent is only my stepfather, and that he has defrauded me of my inheritance.—Mr. Hartridge brings my old sweetheart to see me.—My stepfather is compelled to make partial restitution.—Henry Avenant and I are married.

I TRAVELLED to England as Mr. Hartridge's daughter, having no passport of my own, and my journey was made much easier and pleasanter than when I had last travelled with my father. We were more than a week on the way, for Mr. Hartridge would not let me spend nights in the train, saying, that I must take rest in order to reach England perfectly fresh. His conduct was throughout ever kind and considerate: and he was the most agreeable, entertaining companion—insomuch that I marvelled at Natty's undutifulness towards him. Before we had been two days together he took to calling me by my Christian name, and I felt as safe under his protection as if we had been relatives. Very devotedly did I thank Heaven for having sent me such a friend.

On reaching London we alighted at a large hotel in the West End, and the very next morning when I met Mr. Hartridge at breakfast, I found that he had already

been active in obtaining information that might help me.

"When you were in bed last night, I went to my club," he said, "and looked into the Clergy List—I find your friend, Mr. Avenant, is Rector of Wilston, a parish in Kent, about thirty miles from London. I have ascertained also that your father has retired from his business as a wine merchant, for his name is no longer in the Directory, whereas it stood in the Directory two years ago. As a wine merchant myself, I have been trying to recollect whether we ever had any dealings with your father's firm, and I don't think we have; but I remember having seen your father's partner, Mr. Lingott, at Seville, and I shall call upon him this morning. After that I shall go down to Wilston. Would you like to come with me?"

"Do you think I ought to go?" I asked, with a beating heart, for he had anticipated my dearest wish in saying he should so soon go and seek out Henry Avenant, and yet I felt there would be greater propriety in my not accompanying him.

"That must depend on your own feelings, my dear," he answered, kindly; "perhaps you had better leave me to manage things for to-day."

I said that I would: so after breakfast he left me, bidding me be of good cheer. Just before going out, he placed an envelope in my hand.

"Here is some money," he said, "and you had better go

out shopping, to make the time pass. Alice's clothes fit you very well: but you must have an outfit of your own, and, from what I can see, we are rather behind the London fashions in Seville."

There were fifty pounds in notes in the envelope. All Mr. Hartridge's acts were generous, and his manner of conferring benefits relived one of embarrassment in accepting them. I did want a few things, and went out to purchase them, but I made only a sparing use of the money, not knowing what my circumstances were to be in future. The walk in the streets did me good; but, as may be supposed, my mind was in sore trouble.

I had escaped from confinement; but what was going to become of me? For years I had been looking forward to my liberation, and for years Henry Avenant had been every day—I may almost say every hour—in my thoughts. But ever since I had learned that it had been my father's object to shut me up for life, I had recognised the futility of hoping that Henry Avenant might yet be unmarried; and now that, being free, I could see my position in a clearer light, I made sure that he must have long put me out of his thoughts, as one not to be remembered without mortification. How would he bear to receive Mr. Hartridge's visit? If he were now happily married, the father of a family, and living a life of quiet, would not the reopening of wounds long closed be a cruel and quite useless suffering? Women will understand what anxious pangs these reflections cost me.

As to my father, I knew not yet what to think of his behaviour. It seemed so monstrous to suspect one's father of crime, that I had many and many a time invoked the aid of prayer to stifle the resentment that burned within me. I had endeavoured to make it my rule not to fathom my father's conduct, until I should have the means of doing so in full fairness towards him. This resolution I had not always been able to keep, for there had been times when the hardness of my fate obliterated all sense of justice in me; but, in the main, I had schooled myself to look upon all that had happened as a mystery, which would be solved in time. Since my escape, Mr. Hartridge's suggestion, that my father had been actuated by mercenary motives, and his covert hint that my mother had possibly left some money of which it had been sought to defraud me, impressed me deeply, as showing that according to the judgment of a man of the world there could be no lawful motive for what my father had done.

"I shouldn't wonder," he said to me, while we were travelling, "if it turned out that you were not Mr. B——'s daughter at all."

Thinking upon these words, when I had finished my shopping it suddenly occurred to me that copies of all baptismal and marriage certificates are to be seen at Somerset House. I hailed a cab and drove there. The search, which I anticipated would be long, took but little time, for the Index volumes are kept in surprising good order, so that a quarter of an hour after I had given in my father's and

mother's names—Francis B—— and Eliza Barnard—and paid a shilling, I was shown the entry of their marriage. I had no sooner glanced at it than the mystery with which I was surrounded began to clear, for my mother was described as a widow at the time when she married my father. I had always been told that Barnard was my mother's maiden name; but it turned out that she was the widow of a Mr. Barnard, and that her maiden name was Deane.

The clerk who attended to me said I could have a copy of the certificate for half-a-crown; but before leaving Somerset House I had provided myself with copies of seven certificates—those of my mother's first and second marriages; those of her baptism and of Mr. Barnard's; the certificates of the death of my mother and her first husband; and, lastly, my own baptismal certificate as *Ada Barnard*. From search to search I had quickly been led to the discovery that I was the child—and the only child it seemed—of my mother's first marriage; and, that the man who had treated me with such unnatural coldness all his life, and who had tried to consign me to a long-life captivity, worse than death, was not my father. The deep, silent joy I experienced in learning this almost atoned to me for the vile conduct of the man whom I now felt no longer bound to love or to honour.

I next drove to Doctors' Commons and asked to see a copy of Mr. Barnard's will. It was soon forthcoming, and proved to be very short. Mr. Barnard—my father as I now knew him to be—had bequeathed his whole fortune of

£25,000 in trust for the use of his wife, with absolute remainder to me, his daughter. If my mother lived till I was twenty-one, I was to receive £12,500 on attaining my majority, and the remaining £12,500 was to devolve upon me at her death; or, if I married before my majority, with her consent, I was to receive £12,500 as my marriage portion. The executor to this will was Mr. B——, who subsequently married my mother; and he was appointed my guardian in the event of my mother dying before I was of age. It was not difficult now to see into the motives of Mr. B——'s conduct towards me. By causing me to be brought up as his daughter he had kept me in ignorance of my having a fortune; and his opposition to my marriage arose from the fear that when no longer under his control I might obtain information as to who I was, and of my claims against him. By what processes of fraud he had contrived to get my inheritance into his power remained to be seen.

It was three o'clock before I returned to the hotel. Mr. Hartridge had not come back, so I went into the ladies' coffee-room to have some luncheon. I took all my certificates with me, and examined them again and again with a tumult of sensations and thoughts impossible to describe. One immense feeling of thankfulness was uppermost in my mind, and this was that by the help of these papers I should be able to convince both Mr. Hartridge and Henry Avenant that Mr. B——'s allegations as to my insanity were not to be believed. I have often reflected with horror

that there is nothing so difficult to disprove as insanity, and that by declaring me to be the mad daughter of a mad mother, Mr. B—— had taken the most cunning way of cutting me off from all communion with, and even sympathy from, sane men and women.

I was just leaving the ladies' coffee-room when Mr. Hartridge appeared, with a look of evident good news upon his face :

"Come with me, my dear," he said, "I brought Henry Avenant, and I will leave you two together for a little: we can have a talk afterwards."

Before I could prepare for the meeting by a word, Mr. Hartridge opened a door and pushed me gently into a private room.

"Ada!" cried Henry Avenant, and he caught me in his arms, as I had often dreamed he might do if there were a fulfilment of the prayers I had made during our long, long separation.

* * * * *

Henry Avenant looked exactly the same as when I had last seen him. He was far less changed than I, whose face was browned by the Spanish sun, and who spoke English (as he told me, laughing, some days later) with a quaint foreign accent. He was not married; he had never thought of marrying, for, as he said, holding my hands and gazing into my eyes, he had sorrowed for me but had never forgotten me, nor tried to forget me. If I had died the moment after he said this, I should still have felt my life



to have been a happy one, for by these few words from Henry Avenant years of misery were effaced.

He then told me how my supposed father had declared to him that I was the daughter of a crazy mother, and that doctors had assured him that I had shown symptoms of insanity, too, which would probably break out towards my twentieth year. Henry had been at first staggered by these tidings, and had been induced to promise that he would not communicate with me until I was of age. After this, his rector, instigated by Mr. B——, had advised him to leave the parish ; but on going to London, and reflecting on what

he had been told, Henry had written to my father, enclosing a letter for me, and saying that he still intended to persevere in his suit. It was soon after this that he received a note from my father—containing the certificate of a Spanish doctor, who certified to my being a lunatic, and a few months later my father wrote again to say that I had changed my religion, and intended to become a nun, a claustral life being the only one which I deemed suitable for myself under the circumstances of a periodically recurring malady. “But I continued to doubt,” said Henry; “I thought I would not cease to hope until I heard that you actually had taken the veil. It always struck me as suspicious that your father never exhibited any letter from you, and so I wrote to him regularly every three months to ask news of you; but during the last two years he never answered me. I did not suspect, however, that he was confining you against your will: I should not have thought it possible.”

“It is possible in Spain, Henry; you can have no idea of how helpless I was in the convent.”

“It is a monstrous wrong that has been done you,” he replied, in a tone that showed how deeply his feelings were stirred, “and if the author of it were not your father, I should advise his being brought to justice.”

“I am thankful to say, he is not my father, Henry—look at these papers . . .”

Here Mr. Hartridge came in, and both he and Henry looked over the certificates, whilst I related the facts I had

gathered about my parentage. I now learned that my step-mother had been dead four years, so that the scruples I might have felt, for her sake, about proceeding against Mr. B—— were removed. Nevertheless I did not wish him to be put into prison. He had been my mother's husband, and, cruelly as he had ill-treated me, I considered that he would be sufficiently punished by the exposure of his iniquities, and by being compelled to make restitution to the extent of his means. As to the exposure, I had no option but to demand that it should be a full one, for Henry Avenant insisted that our private friends, to whom the fable about my insanity had been told, should be enlightened as to what had taken place, else evil rumours would cling to me all my life.

"Yes, that is necessary," assented Mr. Hartridge, glancing at his watch, "and I think Mr. Avenant that you and I had better lose no time in going to see Mr. B—— at once. We can take my solicitor with us, and a detective from some Private Enquiry office, to overawe him, and prevent him from escaping. If we delay much he may hear from the convent that Ada has gone, and make his preparations for flight, and I daresay he has heard already."

"Probably, since you were more than a week travelling," remarked Henry.

"Luckily for me the convent was in a great state of confusion when I left," I said, "and I don't think the

Abbess in her then position would have troubled herself to write."

"Besides they are not hasty people in those convents," observed Mr. Hartridge. "The only thing they are active about is getting money—and in that exercise they certainly do bestir themselves."

I have little more to add now. Mr. Hartridge and Henry Avenant found Mr. B—— at home, and the object of their visit took him completely by surprise. He had not heard of my escape; and, like many men who commit crimes, he imagined that he had taken all precautions for impunity, so that, when confronted with the irresistible proofs of his guilt, he had no defence ready, and could only make a dogged avowal, and affect a brazen indifference as to what might be the consequences. An examination of his affairs showed that he was not in a position to restore me the whole of my fortune, for he had been unsuccessful in his speculations, and had only £15,000 left. I requested that he might be allowed to keep a third of this sum, so that he might not be reduced to beggary; but he was made to give me £10,000, and also to perform such a moral atonement as was in his power.

A confession, in the form of a letter, was drawn up by Mr. Hartridge's solicitor and signed by Mr. B——, and a printed copy of it was sent to some fifty persons with whom I had been formerly acquainted. Until the *amende* had been discharged Mr. B—— was kept in virtual custody; but immediately after it he absconded to America, for he

was far more frightened than he chose to appear. It gave me great relief to hear he was gone ; for I should have been unhappy to run any danger of ever meeting him again. He has passed out of my life like an evil genius, and I wish him no harm, but only some repentance.

Henry Avenant and I were married three weeks after my return to England ; and about a couple of months later I had the great joy of hearing from Mr. Hartridge, who had returned to Spain, that he had at last got his daughter out of the convent. No coaxing had been required, for Natty had followed my example of escaping, declaring, in a long letter to me, that she had felt "too utterly lonely" when I was gone. I am inclined to think, however, that her aversion to the restored discipline which followed the deposition of the hump-backed little Abbess had something to do with her resolution. For the Abbess had to resign after all, the Archbishop being too wary a churchman to encourage useless resistance. She betook herself to the convent at Burgos, and soon afterwards founded a small and select order of her own, for the purpose of doing good works of a startling character, which will possibly, fifty years after her death, procure her the honour of being canonised. Her place at Seville was filled by Mother Santa Lorenza, who rules there to this day, in a spirit unfavourable to the development of mutinies.

A few months ago, "Natty," who had resumed her name of Jenny Hartridge, came to stay with my husband and me at Wilston. She had become a Protestant again, and did

not wish to return to Spain. Her pretty face and artless talk quickly attracted the notice of a rich, widowed merchant of forty-five, whose estate is in our parish, and Natty liked him so well that they were married. As he is a genial and sensible man, their union promises to be a happy one.



A POOR DOCTOR'S TEMPTATION:

I.

TURNING over the leaves of an old diary the other day I came upon this entry: "June 17th.—*Queer Story told Me after Dinner by Dr. F——.*" I well remember the telling of that story one evening when the Doctor and I were sitting alone after dining at my house, and I recollect how when the story was done the Doctor seemed suddenly to repent having related it. He begged me particularly never to repeat it whilst he was alive, and never to mention him by his name as the hero of it if I spoke of it after he were dead. On the following day he called upon me on purpose to renew his request more urgently. "It was my wine," said he, "which had set him babbling," and something also in a conversation he had held about mysterious crimes which had stirred his recollections.

I, of course, gave the required promise of secrecy, and kept it; but Dr. F. has been dead ten years now, so I may publish his story by altering the names of the persons and places introduced into it. I will try to shape the

narrative into the Doctor's own words ; and will call him Dr. Furgars.

I was at that time a very poor country surgeon at Hilbrook, in L——shire, said the Doctor, and how poor and hard-worked a creature a young country surgeon can be, few suspect. I was a stranger in the county, and my settling there had been resented as an intrusion by the two long-established practitioners of the district, who abused me for coming to take the bread out of their mouths, though it would have been truer to say that I only looked for the crumbs which might fall from their tables. I had come in consequence of hearing that there was an opening for a third medical man ; and so there was, reckoning by the requirements of the population ; but, unfortunately, the people were too poor to pay for the doctoring which they needed. My practice extended over twelve miles of a country adjacent to a fen, where marsh fevers were frequent ; and my patients were for the most part agricultural labourers of the humblest order. By way of commencing a practice I had accepted the appointment of surgeon to a club whose two hundred members paid four shillings a year apiece for medical and surgical attendance, including medicines and bandages, and the profit of this post was *nil*. Few of the farmers resorted to me, for I was too busy ever to join in their carousals at the village ale-house, and this they attributed to pride. After five years I was making by incessant toil, driving about the country at all hours of the night as well as by day,

about £150 a year, and out of this I had to keep a gig and two horses, and a couple of servants.

To make matters worse a fire broke out in my cottage, and I had to get into debt to buy new furniture ; soon after this my devoted young wife fell ill while nursing our second baby, and it soon became evident that the unhealthy climate was killing her by inches. So long as strength remained to her she was my assistant, mixing the medicines, keeping the books, and doing all that a loving, patient woman can to help her husband ; but the time came when she could no longer stir from her bed, and then my position grew sad indeed. It was agony to me to see my darling wasting away, whilst I knew that if I could but raise a little money I might send her to a warm climate to recruit. If it had not been for my debts, which tied me to the spot, I should have sold our few things, and should have removed to try our fortunes elsewhere ; but whenever I hinted at this project my wife dissuaded me from it.

"She was getting better," she said, and for a time she managed to deceive me as to her real state, because I was so often out that days would pass without my seeing her for more than odd half-hours at a time by daylight. When I returned at night too I was often so exhausted as to be stupid, and unable to keep awake. One bitterly cold winter day, however, it so chanced that I had finished all my visiting by five o'clock, and remained undisturbed at home for the next four hours. Sitting by my wife's bedside, and holding her poor thin hand in mine, I looked into her face,

and for the first time noticed the ravages which illness had made in her. Searching questions elicited the truth, and she began to cry.

"I am afraid I am going to leave you, Johnnie, dear. I hoped I was getting better, but I have felt weaker for some days; and it has been troubling me to think how you and the children will manage when I am gone." . . .

I saw it all now. I saw that there was just one bare chance of saving my wife. If I could get a hundred pounds and send her with the children to the South of France for a year the thing might be done; but it must be done very quickly. I did not hesitate as to what I would do; I loved my wife too well to endure the thought of her dying. But for the fear of agitating her I should have sobbed aloud as she spoke of leaving me. I resolved to sell my gig, my horses, my watch, the most valuable among my books, everything of my own that would fetch money, and she must start before the end of the week. I would go my visiting rounds on foot for the future, or hire myself out as assistant to one of the other doctors, making over to him as much remunerative practice as I had collected.

I had just taken this determination, and was speaking some words of encouragement to my wife, when the sounds of a horse's feet galloping were heard in our road, and a rider reined at my door. Such summonses at night were too frequent to cause me any surprise, so I went down to open the door myself, expecting to find a farmer on his cob. But I saw a well-mounted groom in livery, who said :

"Please, Doctor, can you come at once to Turrick Hall? A gentleman who is on a visit to my master has had a fall from his horse."



"Turrick Hall?" I answered. "Is it not generally Dr. Comax who attends there? Has he sent for two?"

"No, sir, Mr. Woolf ordered me especially to fetch you, and nobody else. If your horses are not fresh, sir, you can ride this one, which will take you to the Hall in forty

minutes, and I'll get the gig at the Chequers to carry me back."

"Very well," I said. "Come in and take a glass of something, and I will be ready to start in a few minutes."

"This summons to Turrick Hall was the most unexpected thing that could have happened to me. Mr. Woolf of Turrick was one of the richest landowners in the county, and his patronage, if it became permanent, would give me a wonderful lift. That Mr. Woolf had paid me a special compliment in sending for me was certain, for Dr. Comax resided three miles nearer to the Hall than I did, and I should have thought that in the case of an accident the nearest surgeon at hand would have been called in. It looked much as if Dr. Comax and the Squire had quarrelled. However, I went into my wife's room to bear her the good news (for to a struggling surgeon anything that brings a wealthy patient is good news), and I told her not to fret if I should be away all night, for I should then be earning a five or ten guinea fee. She well knew how often I had been obliged to perform the most difficult operations, and to watch through whole nights on club cases which brought nothing. I had quickly put into my pockets the instruments, lint, and drugs I was likely to want, and sprang into the saddle. As I was starting the groom said :

"You know the road to Turrick, sir? You'll have to mind the sand-pit about a quarter of a mile from the park gates. The road branches off to the right and left, and it's the narrowest that leads to the park. The broad

one has been made by the carts going to the sand-pits, and it often misleads people on dark nights. It's an awkward spot."

"They ought to put a lantern there," I answered mechanically.

"That used to be done, sir," answered the groom; "but the village boys threw stones at the lanterns, or stole 'em. They're a bad lot."

Turrick Hall was seven miles from my cottage; but the roads were level, and I was mounted on a powerful horse, which I rode as hard as the darkness would allow. In half an hour I had reached the spot where the main road branched off to the sand-pit; and I saw that the groom had been right to give me a caution, for at night any rider, not previously warned, would have taken the broader tract. The way to the Park from this place was along a narrow lane which only widened at a few yards from the lodge gates. Once through the gates, a broad avenue of half a mile led to Turrick Hall, and this part of the journey my horse performed at full gallop. The door of the Hall was opened as soon as I dismounted, and the butler at once conducted me to Mr. Woolf's study.

I had never seen Mr. Woolf, but knew that he was a young man who had but three years since inherited his estates, and had only been married a twelvemonth. He came in holding a handkerchief to his face, which was crossed by a deep purple scar or weal, and there was a great nervousness about his looks and manner. He was a handsome, well-

built man, having a military appearance, for he had been five years in the army.

"It is one of my friends, Captain Torreston, who has met with this accident," he said. "His horse shied as we were riding together, and threw him; his foot got entangled in the stirrup, and he was dragged for half-a-mile along a part of the road near the sand pit, which has been mended with jagged flints. He has been unconscious ever since, and lies, I am sorry to say, in a fearful state."

"You have been hurt, too, I see," I said, glancing at Mr. Woolf's face.

"Yes, I got that scar in attempting to save him," replied the Squire with visible embarrassment. "I was trying to overtake his horse and cut across it, for I was afraid it would rush down to the sand pit. To do this I had to ride close to the edge of the road, and I hit my face against the branch of a tree overhanging the hedge. However, that's a small matter. Will you come up to see the patient?"

Mr. Woolf led me to the first floor, and we entered a large bedroom, where a man-servant was watching. On some chairs were the patient's clothes covered with blood and mud.

I approached the bed, and saw a man lying on his back and moaning faintly, with his head wrapped up in bandages. A feel of his pulse convinced me that he was sinking; but when I had removed his bandages, I found his head in such a battered state that it became a wonder how he had not died already. I asked for some hot water, a sponge, and

some linen, and they were promptly fetched ; in the meantime I had applied a restorative to the patient's lips, but with no effect, for he had not strength to swallow. As Mr. Woolf's servant was laying out the things I wanted, his master said to him—

"You had better go to bed now, Williams, I may want you in the middle of the night ; if so, I will call you ; but for the present Doctor Furgars and I can attend on the Captain alone."

Williams muttered something about his readiness to sit up, but the Squire enjoined him rather testily to do as he was ordered.

"All my servants are in London," he said apologetically to me. "I only came down to Turrick on business, intending to stay half a week, and I brought Torreston to keep me company, poor fellow."

"Mrs. Woolf is not at Turrick, then ?" I said.

"No, I am thankful to say she is not. This would have been a heavy blow to her. And she is now in very delicate health."

"If you are willing to assist me, Mr. Woolf, I must ask you to do as I have done. Take off your coat," I remarked ; "we must shift the patient's position whilst I bathe his wounds."

"Oh, certainly—certainly. Poor fellow, anything I can do for him will be done with pleasure."

"I see you have not yet had his wounds bathed ?"

"No. I thought the first thing to be done was to stop

the flow of blood with bandages. I feared to promote the bleeding by using warm water."

I made no answer, for I was examining Captain Torreston's wounds, and the severe nature of them amazed me. His skull was fractured in two places, before and behind. His nose and one of his cheek bones were broken, and there was a gash on the upper lip, which had cut through it and splintered two of the teeth. I then inspected the body, and found several large bruises. And I discovered, also, that three ribs were fractured.

"The horse must have done that in kicking him," said Mr. Woolf, looking intently at me, and his manner was more and more nervous.

"How far did you say that the horse dragged him?" I asked.

"Fully half a mile, I should say, and Torreston got more hurt, perhaps, than would otherwise have happened by struggling so hard."

"He was not stunned then by his fall?"

"No; at least I think not, but I can't say. It was all so confusing."

"Either of these wounds must have stunned him," I observed, pointing to those which had broken the skull, "and I cannot conceive how he got them both. The fractures of the nose and cheek-bone, too, are not lacerated wounds such as would be caused by being dragged over flints."

"Perhaps the horse's hoofs caused them. The brute plunged and kicked most violently."

"Perhaps," I answered. But I was just then stooping to look at the traces of a weal of Captain Torreston's face which much resembled that which disfigured Mr. Woolf's countenance. Part of it was obliterated by the deeper wounds in the cheek-bone, but part of it on the injured cheek could be traced distinctly. As I looked, the patient heaved a deep sigh, which was his last, and lay dead.

"My services are of no avail now, Mr. Woolf," I said, depositing the head on the blood-stained pillow. "Your friend has passed away without suffering."

"Poor Torreston—poor Torreston! What a day this has been!" exclaimed Mr. Woolf, clasping his hands, and, leaving the bedside, he threw himself into a chair, hid his face, and for several minutes seemed overcome.

I did nothing to disturb him while he sorrowed. I washed my hands in silence, and my thoughts were all about the dead man's wounds. They puzzled me. But up to that moment there was no presentiment in my mind that there had been any foul play in this affair. Suddenly, as I glanced towards Mr. Woolf, I saw his eyes fixed upon me with an expression I shall never forget. The large room was but imperfectly lighted by two wax candles, and Mr. Woolf had seated himself in a dark corner, where the pallor of his face and the agitated tone of his voice produced an unearthly effect, which gave me a chill.

"There will be an inquest after this, Dr. Furgars?" he said.

"Yes, as it is a case of sudden death."

"*There must be no inquest!*" he replied, pronouncing every word with terrifying emphasis. And leaving his corner, he strode up towards me, touching with his forefinger the weal on his face. "Do you see this scar, doctor? Listen to me, and I will tell you the truth. That man struck me with his whip. We had a quarrel, a furious quarrel, but one of his own seeking. I hit him back, and he tried to assault me with the butt end of his whip. Then in self-defence I struck him again, and he fell from his horse. I never meant to kill him. It was all an accident—an accursed accident. But there he is, dead, and if an inquest be held I shall be hanged or sent to penal servitude for life, for nobody will believe my story."

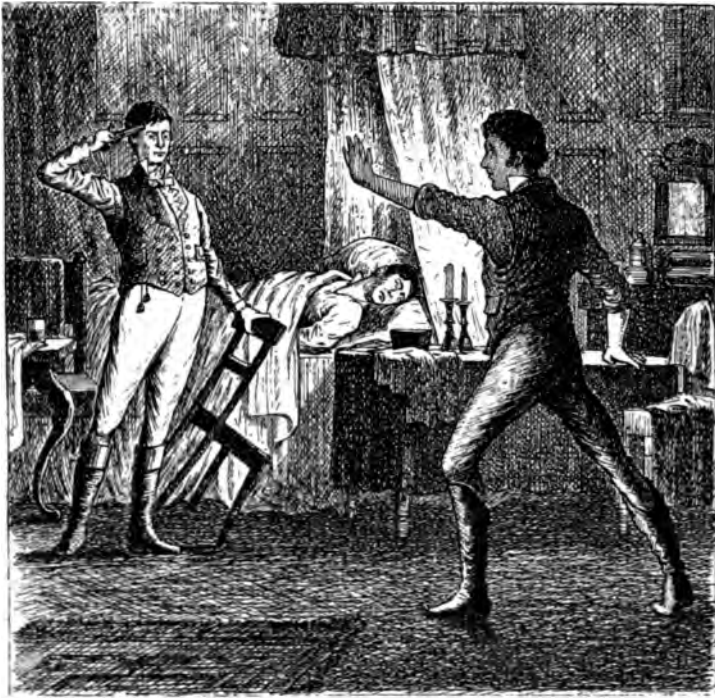
I listened to the confession with a tumult of feeling that may be imagined. Mr. Woolf's manner of telling his story was not less awful than the matter of it, for he seemed possessed with a maniacal fright.

"Why should your story not be believed?" I stammered.

"It won't be," he answered; "I shall be condemned as a murderer. My poor young wife and our child unborn will die of the shock, and my family will be disgraced. Have you the heart to see this trouble fall upon an innocent man, or will you save him? I tell you that if you knew what foul wrong that man did me, and tried to do, you would own that he met his death justly. And, now, it is in your power to save my life. If you will aid me in concealing Torreston's death for two days, and then certify that he died of a fall from horseback, there will be no

inquest. For your reward you will have a thousand pounds, my heartfelt thanks, and all the assistance I can lend you hereafter in your profession."

"You are asking me to run an immense risk, Mr. Woolf,"



I said trembling, as I felt myself tempted by the magnitude of the bribe. "Assuming that what you say is true—I——"

"I must have your consent or refusal at once," he inter-

rupted excitedly. "See, here is a loaded pistol ; I will not face the infamy in store for me ; so, if you will not give me your help, I shall blow out my brains before your eyes in a minute from this time. Consider, you are a poor man, and a thousand pounds is a large sum."

I was, indeed, a poor man ; and I understood now why Mr. Woolf had sent for me instead of Dr. Comax, whom a bribe would possibly not have tempted. But I also thought of my poor dying wife, who might be saved from the grave by the chance now thrown in my way. Why should I be desirous of seeing the Squire condemned, if he were innocent ? and if he were guilty, where was my proof of his guilt ? I knew, too, by the expression of his eyes that his threat of self-destruction was no vain boast. He clicked his pistol to full cock, and stepped back two paces as I was hesitating. He lifted the weapon to his forehead, when I opened my mouth to speak, and I had to stop him by a quick gesture :—

"Very well, Mr. Woolf," I said ; "I will believe your story and do what you desire."

II.

CAPTAIN TORRESTON was buried without any inquest being held. I spent the greater part of two days and nights at Turrick Hall, taking it in turns with Mr. Woolf to watch by the bed where the corpse lay. We were never both

absent from the room at the same time. The servants were ordered to bring up broths, poultices, hot water, clean linen, just as if the patient were alive ; and on the second day the Squire told his butler that he thought the Captain would recover. A bulletin to this effect was printed in the county papers which reported the accident.

It was not until forty-eight hours after the Captain's death that Mr. Woolf announced him to be dead. This was towards midnight ; and on the following day two old women from the village were sent for to lay out the body. They were too ignorant to be able to judge from the state of the corpse whether it had been dead twelve hours or sixty, the more so as I had taken artificial means to arrest decomposition. I signed a certificate to the effect that Captain Torreston had died from the effects of a fall from horseback ; and when I had so done, on the third night of my ghastly watch, Mr. Woolf handed me a thousand pounds in bank-notes.

"You have saved my life and my wife's," he said with emotion ; "I wish I could express to you what gratitude I feel."

I had come to the Hall on the afternoon of that day in my own gig ; and I drove home alone soon after midnight with the money in my pocket. What my sensations were I cannot precisely recollect, but from the moment when I had agreed to a concealment of the truth, I knew that my interest in escaping detection was quite equal to Mr. Woolf's own ; and my nervous fears were of the same nature as his.

I had brought myself to believe in his innocence, perhaps because I resolutely banished all reflections which might have led me to a contrary conclusion; and I salved my conscience for accepting his large bribe by the thought that he could well afford to pay me for running a risk which might entail my utter ruin, and that it was only my duty, in view of possible detection, to take care that my wife and children were provided for.

It was very hard to me to be obliged to keep the secret from my wife, for I had never kept anything hidden from her, and I foresaw that I should now be pledged to a whole course of falsehood to account for my possession of so much money. During my two days' attendance at the Hall I had paid two flying visits to my cottage, and had told my wife that Mr. Woolf had promised me a big fee for my skilful attendance on the patient; and that, on the strength of this, I meant to send her to Mentone, where I was sure that she would recover health. I also wrote to a maiden aunt of hers, begging her to come and take charge of my wife on the journey, promising that I would pay all expenses. My poor wife was greatly cheered by my good fortune, and by the happiness I seemed to derive from the hope that a year's residence in a sunny clime would do her good; but it was a sad drawback to her joy that she must leave England without me. Seeing this, I meditated whether I would not now leave Hillbrook altogether, and attempt to get a practice among the numerous and wealthy English residents in the South of France. As I started homewards from Turrick

Hall with my money, it occurred to me that this was the best thing I could do, since I now had enough capital to support my family during the three years at least, even if I did not earn a penny during that time.

It was a dark, rainy night as I drove away from Turrick. In the narrow lane outside the park gates I could not see a foot beyond the circle of light shed by my gig lamps; but as I approached the road which led to the sand-pits I was surprised to see a very brilliant light as from a powerful lantern; and in the midst of that light a horse standing motionless with a rider in his saddle. I was close to him before I had had time to conjecture who he might be: but as I was about to pass he reined round and trotted beside me, turning in his saddle, and staring me full in the face. What a stare, and what a face! I gave a start which nearly made me fall from the gig, and I broke into a cold perspiration; for in this appalling rider I recognised Captain Torreston. His head was bare, his face was covered with blood, and with his forefinger he kept pointing to his various wounds. Not a word came from his lips, but the light in which he had first appeared continued to glare around him; and the steps of his horse were perfectly noiseless. I was too frightened to cry out; the reins dropped from my hands, and I could only sit trembling and frozen until the apparition vanished, which it suddenly did at the first turn of the road.

I must have lost consciousness then without falling from my seat, for I was abruptly startled by finding that my

horse had stopped, and that a rural policeman was placing the reins in my hands.

"Fallen asleep, eh, Doctor?" he said, good-naturedly. "I doan't wonder at it, with all the night jobs yo've got to do. How's the poor gem'man at t' Hall?"

"Dead," I answered, mechanically. "Good night; and thank you," and I drove on. "Good God, all my nerves are shaken, and I must have been asleep," I reflected, and this idea was borne out by the fact that my horse had shown no signs of fear at the apparition, so that it was evident he had not seen it. Yet *I* had seen it; whether waking or in a dream, I had seen Captain Torreston; and this less than ten minutes after I had left the Hall, being then wide awake, and feeling no sleepiness. I reached home, shivering with cold and terror.

All the inmates of my cottage were in bed, but my wife's aunt had arrived, and I saw some boxes in the hall, ready packed for departure. Stealing softly up to my wife's room, I found her awake, for my coming in had roused her from her light sleep.

"Is it all over, Johnnie, dear?" she asked, gazing at me wistfully. "How cold you look."

"Yes, darling, it is all over," I faltered; "but, see here what Mr. Woolf has given me," and I put all my money into her hands.

"A thousand pounds!" she exclaimed, in a wondering voice, when she had counted the notes.

"Yes, a thousand. After all, you know, a first-rate

London surgeon would have charged half that for coming down to Turrick, and giving three days' attendance ; and Mr. Woolf is a rich man, who could afford to double the fee."

I had at first intended to show my wife only £500 of the money, but I loathed the thought of having to lie to her for the remainder. She looked so pleased, and bent forward to kiss me with an expression full of trust and gladness.

"Well, I am sure, my darling, you have deserved the money," she said. "Think how you have slaved and lost your rest for numbers of poor people who could never pay you. But God is very good to us after all."

This was more than I could bear. I took her hand, and bending over it, sobbed like a child. She stroked my head, and called to me in her gentle voice not to grieve, for that our days of struggling were evidently ended now. She would get well, and I must come with her to France to take a holiday, for that I needed a change of air as much as she did, and I should be stronger then to work, and would no doubt have a better practice when I returned, for Mr. Woolf's kindness would not forsake me. All this, and much more, my wife said, showing such a pride and loving confidence in me that my heart was wrung. I swear that, if it had not been for my dread of injuring her in her critical state of health, I would have told her everything. I dared not destroy the illusion which gave her so much joy, and which had brought something like a flush of returning health to her dear face.

"Mary, my darling, you will take hope now, won't you!"

I said, as soon as I could speak. "Promise me you will feel confidence in your cure when you start. Think, I will join you in a few days, as soon as the Captain's funeral is over."

"Oh, if you come to me, Johnnie, I shall be sure to get well. You won't delay coming?"

"No—no. I am anxious to get away. I hate this place which has made you ill. We will settle together in France if the climate should suit you. I will try and make a practice there."

"How nice that will be," she said; "but I shall always think with pleasure of Hillbrook. Oh, how I wish you could come with me to-morrow. The journey would seem so much shorter. Couldn't I wait for a few days?"

"No, my darling; you must start at once," I said. "But your journey must be made very easy and pleasant. You can all travel in first-class now, and go by short stages, and rest at night in good hotels."

"We mustn't be extravagant though, Johnnie," said my wife with a smile. "This is a wonderful windfall, it may be a long time before we get such another. I wish, though, it had come through your having saved somebody's life. It is so dreadful to think that poor Captain Torreston is dead after having brought us this good luck."

The next day my wife went away with her aunt and the children, and when I had seen her off I rode out to see some patients whom I had been obliged to neglect during the last three days. Those of them who belonged to the Club were crusty at my conduct, and this reminded me that I must

resign my situation as Club Surgeon at once if I wished to be free to leave the country. I accordingly wrote to the Club Committee as soon as I got home. I was just closing my letter when a phaeton drew up at my door, and Mr. Woolf stepped out. He was dressed in deep mourning, and had come to tell me that Captain Torreston's funeral would not take place at Turrick, as the deceased's friends had requested that his body might be sent to the South of England, where they resided.

"This will make it all the better for us," said Mr. Woolf in a low tranquil voice, when we were alone. "I am going to have the body put into three coffins, one of lead tightly soldered, and they are not likely to open him."

An involuntary shudder crept over me as I talked to this man. I had been thinking all day with trouble of the apparition I had seen the day before, and his quick eye doubtless discerned some constraint in my manner. I thought it right to tell him that I had come to the resolution of leaving the country, and I gave him as my reason my wife's ill-health.

"Is that the only cause?" he asked, in a suspicious whisper. "Do you feel frightened, Doctor?"

"No: my only reason is the one I have stated."

"It may create suspicion if you go," he said, musingly. "You ought not to depart suddenly. I met Dr. Comax as I was coming along, and he looked very blue at me, for, of course, everybody has heard that I summoned you instead of him. Indeed, I intended to recommend you to all my friends."

"You are very good," I answered ; "but everybody will understand that I have gone to join my wife. Indeed, to tell you the truth, the money you gave me came at a moment when I was in the sorest distress from not being able to send away my wife for a change of air."

"You seem to be very fond of your wife," said Mr. Woolf, eyeing me narrowly. "I hope you have not told her anything of our secret?"

"No, nor shall I," I answered.

"Because," added he uneasily, "a secret like that when it passes into a third person's ear, is as good as blown to the four winds."

"You may quite rely on me," I replied, looking openly at him. "But you ought to feel additionally reassured by my going hundreds of miles from England."

"Your word and your own interest reassures me most," he answered. "I should feel myself in a bad way if I had not them to depend upon." After this he went away, but I could see that he was dejected and mistrustful. He had been in good spirits when he entered the cottage.

Two days afterwards I heard that Mr. Woolf had gone south with his friend's body, and a few days later I read his name in the papers as having attended the funeral, which passed off without any incident. Then a week went by, and I made my preparations for selling all of my property that was not portable. But during that time the thought of the apparition preyed continually on my mind. I could not dismiss it, and at last I resolved that I would take another

night drive by the sand-pit road. To a surgeon the possession of calm nerves is a necessity, and I felt that I should not for a long time have any composure unless I did my best to ascertain whether I had, or had not, been the victim of a morbid fancy. To be sure I might pass by the road a hundred times more without seeing anything there again. But it was just possible, also, that something might occur to clear up my doubts. Accordingly I set out on the night previous to the day fixed for my leaving England.

I had done little work that day, and had slept well the night before; so that my nerves, at no time very weak, were quite composed. For two hours before my groom-boy brought the gig round I read an entertaining book; and, just before starting swallowed a glass of beer—the best thing to keep the cold out; and to prevent my experiencing any depression from the change of temperature out of doors, I took care to wrap myself up warmly.

It was a beautiful clear, frosty night, with a full moon up—just the night for a drive: but I cannot say that I started with anything like enjoyment of mind. My expedition was a dismal one at best, and I was wofully afraid of the mental distress that would continue to haunt me if I should behold the apparition. However, I drove on briskly, and on reaching the turn in the road where the apparition had left me, I drew in and thumped my chest, whistled and stamped my feet to assure myself that I was awake. From this point to that where the road diverged towards the sand-pit was about



" They closed : the ghostly horseman got his hand on Mr. Woolf's rein, and both together galloping and struggling, they plunged up the road to the sand-pit."

half a mile, and the space was that where Captain Torreston had met his death by being dragged over flint stones, as was commonly supposed. That part of the road had recently been mended.

To make still sure that I was awake I lit a cigar, and drove on at a leisurely pace. I was at about a hundred yards from the road-bend, when all at once the brilliant light appeared, and the horseman in it, motionless as when I had first seen him.

The sight almost sickened me with horror ; and I pulled up my horse with a jerk. The phantom rider made a sign with his hand, moved towards me noiselessly as before, and was within a stride of my horse's head when he stopped and quickly turned his head. I could hear the rapid trot of a horse from the opposite end of the road, and it seemed as if he had heard it too. In a minute another rider appeared, and I heard an unearthly shriek, followed by a furious scampering. The two riders seemed to be fighting. I drove forward, and beheld Mr. Woolf brandishing his whip over the head of the phantom rider, and trying to evade his pursuit. They closed, the ghostly horseman got his hand on Mr. Woolf's rein, and both together, galloping and struggling, they plunged up the road to the sand-pit. I heard a yell, a crash of falling sand, then all was dark and silent again ; and I drove home persuaded I had seen a supernatural vision of two riders, both phantoms, sent to warn me that I had been accessory to a foul murder. I thought then that Mr. Woolf was still in London.

The next morning, as I was leaving Hillbrook, the ostler from the Chequers, who had come to fetch my luggage, said: "Have you heard the bad news, sir? Squire Woolf is dead! His horse bolted with him last night in the Turrick road, and they both fell into the sand-pit."

* * * * *

When Dr. Furgas had finished his story, he said:

"No harm ever came to me from my share in that awful affair. My wife recovered her health at Mentone; and we then came to London, where an opportunity for getting a practice offered itself—I have prospered uniformly ever since."

"And you really saw a ghost?" I asked.

"I saw what I have described," he answered; "but I do not profess to explain it."



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S LOVE AFFAIR.

I.

WHEN Colonel Chowery, late of the Madras Infantry, went to settle at Altenstadt with his wife and seven children, he was impelled only by motives of economy. If it had been predicted to him that his going to reside at the capital of Gothia would nearly cause a revolution in that country, and would lead to complications threatening a European war, the disturbance of the balance of power, and the upsetting of an English Ministry, he would have thought such contingencies highly improbable.

Colonel Chowery was not an imaginative man; he could not even imagine how it was that, practising the utmost thrift, he found it so difficult to square his accounts every quarter-day. As for wars and other such exciting things, he fancied he had done with them all when he retired from the Indian service on half pay, with three medals, and a thankful mind at having not the slightest touch of liver complaint.

But as a man can never make quite sure of where he is going when he drives a gig, so a father can never plainly

foresee what trials are in store for him when he owns a pretty daughter. Mabel Chowery, the Colonel's eldest girl, was one of the sweetest maidens you can picture in your mind's eye, and it pleased his Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Gothia to fall in love with her. Here you have at once all the elements for the very pretty kettle of fish above mentioned.

The thing came about, quite naturally, in this way: Mabel, who was then seventeen, used to go every afternoon at four to fetch home her two younger sisters, Alice and Mary, who attended the High School for young ladies. One December day, as the three girls were close to their home in the Blumenastrasse, and were walking very fast and gaily because of the frost, they saw a small Gothian boy, aged four, with his shirt tail sticking out of his trousers (as the fashion for boys is in that kingdom), toddle across the road just as a phaeton and pair were coming down at a spanking trot. "Oh, Mab, he'll be run over," shrieked Alice and Mary together; but before they could add another word Mabel had rushed to the small Gothian's rescue, and had borne him out of harm's way so fast that she lost her balance and fell down with him. The small Gothian, feeling deeply aggrieved, roared and kicked out. The driver of the phaeton pulled up his team on their haunches, and Mabel, as she stood up pink with confusion, recognised the Crown Prince in the tall, dark, and handsome man who had alighted, hat in hand, and was asking her, in a voice of sincere concern, whether she was hurt.

"No, sir, not in the least," faltered Mabel, blushing all the more now she saw who the speaker was. Everybody knew the Crown Prince by sight; his photograph was in a hundred shop windows.

"You had a bad fall," he said kindly, "and it was my fault. Will you let me offer you my arm and escort you home?"

"I thank you," said Mabel. "We live over the way."

But the Crown Prince escorted her across the road, praising her courage, and apologising for his own carelessness in so nearly causing an accident. When he had seen her safe to her door he made her a low bow and retired. The small Gothian who had been the occasion of this fuss had retreated up a side street, squalling with all his might.

You may be sure this little adventure with the Crown Prince became the principal topic of conversation at Colonel Chowery's tea table that evening. Mabel laughed at the affair, and thought that the Prince had made too much of it; but she owned that he had been very polite, and her sisters declared that he was the most charming man they had ever seen. The Colonel, being unimaginative, listened without saying much. He could not realise the scene as it had happened, and fixed his thoughts only on this palpable fact, that Mabel had slightly grazed her wrist. He suggested an embrocation, and there he supposed the matter would end.

But next morning the newspapers of Altenstadt published a paragraph about the bravery of the young English lady, and toward noon Colonel Von Schmeikelmund, the Court

Chamberlain, called at the Colonel's lodging, saying he had been sent by their Majesties the King and Queen, as well as by his Royal Highness the Crown Prince, to inquire whether the Fräulein Mabel had suffered no injuries from her accident. The Herr Graf was a very urbane old gentleman, with a white head like a ball of cotton-wool. He said many pretty things to the Chowerys, and concluded by announcing that he had the royal orders to send them an invitation to the next Court ball, on New Year's Day.

Now Colonel Chowery had not come to Altenstadt with any intention of attending Court balls, which are, at the best, expensive affairs, entailing an outlay for white gloves and cab hire, but such a gracious invitation as the King of Gothia had sent could not be refused. Mrs. Chowery would not hear of its being refused, and Mabel was as pleased as all girls are at the prospect of going to her first grand ball in a new dress. The Colonel had to send his old uniform to a tailor to be touched up a little and let out in the waist, for German living was making him stout. He then called on Sir Passmore Stoley, the British Minister, and was received by his Excellency with a coldness not devoid of irritation. Sir Passmore could not call to mind any precedent for a presentation in this irregular way. His son and secretary, young Gow Stoley, could not remember any precedent either. Both these magnates contrived to make the old Indian officer feel that he was transgressing the routine of the legation in a manner not creditable to his sense of propriety. The Colonel returned home much mortified from this interview

with his country's representative, and vented some of his displeasure on his wife and daughter. He was a short puzzled-headed man, who had always lived on good terms with constituted authorities, and thought it hard that at his age he should get a wiggling because his eldest girl had been so incautious as to draw down public attention on herself. "I wish, Mab," he said, "that in future when you see dirty little boys in the street you would let them alone."

Nevertheless the Colonel, his wife, and Mabel did go to the ball, and amongst all the ladies there, married or single, there was not one who looked so well as Miss Chowery. She wore a white silk dress with bunches of roses, and had roses in her hair. Many of the Gothia nobility stared at her large soft blue eyes, her pretty little mouth, and her bright brown curls. But Lady Stoley, a proud and portly dame, covered with jewels, ignored the Chowerys utterly, and she pinched the arm of her son Gow when she saw the latter gaze at Mabel with sheepish wonder. This did not prevent Gow Stoley from gazing again as soon as he could do so undetected.

At these German Courts people to be presented are ranged down the two sides of a long room, foreigners standing beside the Ministers of their respective countries. The Ministers and their attachés are in uniform. At ten o'clock a pair of folding-doors are thrown open, and the King, Queen, royal family, ladies and gentlemen in waiting, and maids of honour all stream in, preceded by the Chamberlain, whose gold key of office dangles from his button-hole. The

Court procession moves slowly down one side of the room and then up the other, stopping every time a presentation is made, and their Majesties generally address a few words to visitors of distinction.

Now on this occasion the King and Queen of Gothia spoke to nobody except the Chowerys. His Majesty was a tall, bluff, and dignified potentate, with a healthy belief in the divine right of German monarchs, but with a good deal of hearty kindness toward people who treated him reverently. He not only smiled with a fatherly condescension on Mabel, but he kissed her on both cheeks, the Queen did the same, and they both called her a brave girl. After this the King turned to the Colonel and Mrs. Chowery, and shook hands with them both. Sir Passmore, in his gold-laced swallow-tail, looked blue, and Lady Stoley looked still bluer; but the King paid no attention to them, once ceremonious bows had been exchanged. A colonel was sacred in his Majesty's eyes. No matter if he had only been in the Indian service; he had commanded a regiment, he had been in battle, and was consequently, to the King's thinking, a much worthier individual than a civilian like Sir Passmore Stoley. "Colonel Chowery, I like the sight of your English red-coats," said his Majesty: "you must tell me all about your campaigns."

Soon after this the band struck up, quadrilles were formed, and Mabel found herself dancing in the royal set with the Crown Prince. His Royal Highness was splendidly attired in a hussar uniform blazing with diamond stars. But with-

out any flattery, it may be said that his eyes sparkled as much as his diamonds. There was not a comelier prince among the heirs-apparent of Europe, nor a faster, for he made the thalers of his royal papa fly like sparks off a grindstone. He spoke to Mabel in English, and after conducting her to her seat at the end of the quadrille, begged the pleasure of dancing the supper valse with her by-and-by. He had no sooner retired than a whole rush of Gothian princes, counts, and barons, all in uniform and all decorated, pressed forward to offer themselves as partners. Not a man boasting less than thirty-two quarterings had a chance in this throng. Mabel had been raised *per saltum* to the post of the belle of the Gothian Court, and a romantic interest attached to her because her adventure with the dirty little street boy had been much magnified by rumour. So her card was filled up in a trice with so many great names that it read like a leaf torn out of the *Almanach de Gotha*.

But amongst all these Fürsten, Grafen, and Freiherren there was not one who looked so handsome as the Crown Prince, or danced so well. This, at least, was Miss Chowery's opinion. There were many noble Gothian ladies and girls who had expected to have their turns footing it over the floor with his Royal Highness, but they were disappointed. The Crown Prince danced with nobody except Mabel that evening. After the quadrille he withdrew into a window embrasure, and entered into a long conversation with Count von Stolz, the Prime Minister, an old gentleman with a face impenetrable as cast iron. Old Stolz was pleased to see the

Prince or otherwise for it was not often that the King's son sought the society of his father's wise counsellors, and therefore the ~~young gentleman~~ proceeded to improve the occasion. But the Prince was not listening at all. His eye kept wandering towards Mabel, and presently a moody look stole over his face, and he stroked his moustache nervously, as if displeased to see her dance with so many men.

It is the best of princes that they seldom care to hide their displeasure. Mabel found the Prince sally when he came to dance with her for the second time.

"You are very fond of dancing," he said, in a pettish tone.

"Oh, very, sir," she answered, innocently: "this is my first ball."

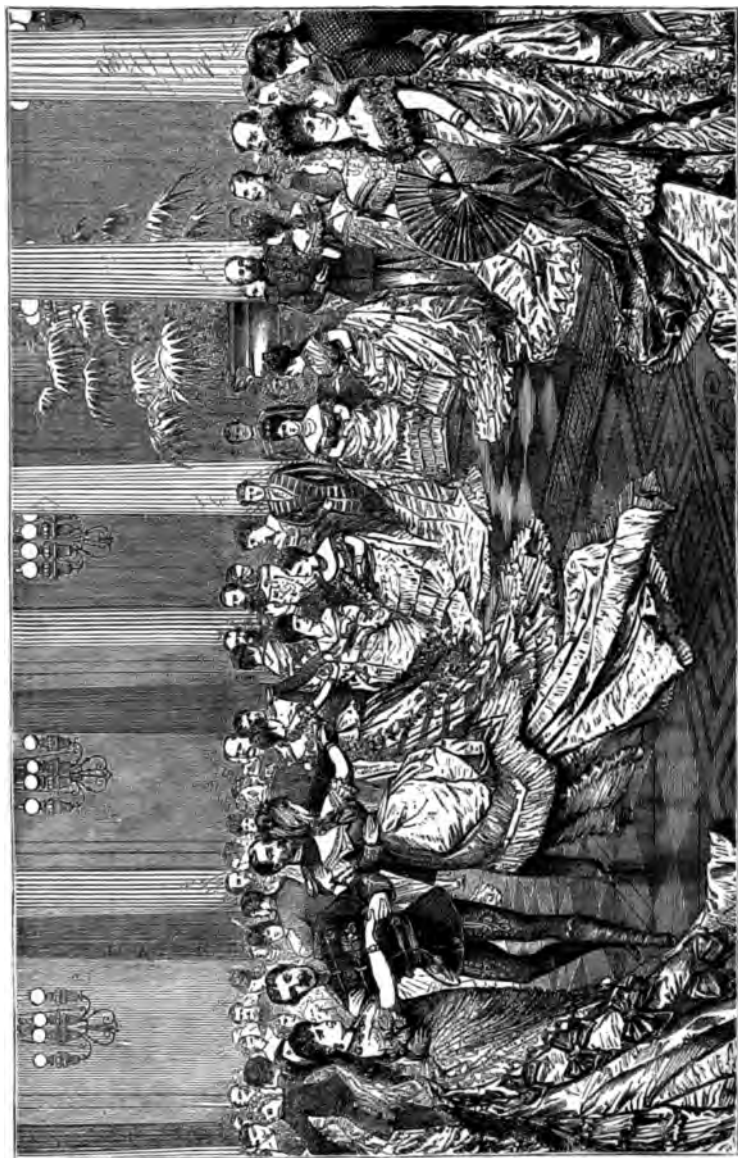
"Your first, is it? I should have thought you did nothing but dance all day and night, it seems so natural to you."

Mabel made no reply, for they had begun to spin round to the strains of a new waltz composed by Herr Zingel, the Hofcapellmeister; but when his Royal Highness had waltzed off some of his ill humour, and had brought Mabel to a sudden stand-still, flushed and a little breathless, he whispered:—

"I have never had such a partner as you. I feel as if I should never again care to dance with anybody else."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Mabel, blushing and astonished.

"You must come to all the other Court balls this winter," proceeded the Prince. "But you will dance with me only, won't you? It makes me jealous to see you dance with other men."



.. They had begun to spin round to the strains of a new waltz composed by Herr Zingel, the Hofcapellmeister."

Mabel glanced up. Her eyes met the Prince's, and she instantly lowered them. But the mischief was done. It requires only a spark to explode a magazine; but the Prince's look had wrought a cruel disturbance in the little English girl's heart. She was too flurried to say anything or to understand much of what he said from that moment. He took her to supper, contrary to all rules of etiquette, for there was a Serene Highness present who had a claim to his escort, and the Court Chamberlain, Count von Schmeikelmund, observed this breach of duty with consternation. The Queen also noticed it, and her Majesty's eyes were suddenly opened to the fact that the heir-apparent had been paying rather too much attention all the evening to Fräulein Chowery. But the King of Gothia noticed nothing, for he was deep in conversation with the little Colonel as to the comparative advantages of close or open order in skirmishing with rebellious Hindoos. The General Count von Schwertspiel, commander-in-chief of the Gothian forces, had been called, with some other generals, to adjudicate upon this dispute, and there was quite a big circle of military men all as one with their monarch in demonstrating the superiority of close order to Colonel Chowery, while the more frivolous spirits of both sexes were stepping to Herr Zingel's measures.

"You are not drinking your champagne," murmured the Crown Prince to Mabel, in the supper-room. "You are not angry at the words I spoke to you?"

"No, sir," answered Mabel, faintly.

"Smile, then; else I shall think I have offended you."

She tried to smile; but it was a weak effort. She wished that she were beside her mother, and that this ball were over; all the joy of it had died out from her heart. Oh, why did he look at her like that, and talk in such a way when he could mean so little by what he said? Was he not a king's son, and how could she forget that?

Mabel danced no more that night, and riding home she sat silent and trembling in her corner of the cab, while the Colonel discoursed with great complacency upon what the King had said, and what he had said to the King, and what a fine country Gothia was, and what learned fellows those Gothian generals were.

II.

ON the morning after the ball the Crown Prince and his august mother had a little conversation. The Prince wanted her Majesty to appoint Fräulein Chowery to be reader and companion to his young sisters, the Princesses Wilhelmina, Frederica, and Sophia. He was very affectionate in urging this request, as it was his custom to be when he wanted anything; and the Queen, who was dotingly fond of him, generally humoured his most unreasonable wishes for the sake of being petted by him a little. But this request about Fräulein Chowery was really too stiff. Her Majesty had matrimonial views for her son, and reminded him that he was as good as engaged to the Princess Carolina, daughter of the King of Swabia.

"It is time, my dear Fritz, that you went to the Swabian court and commenced your wooing," observed her Majesty. "Your marriage ought to be settled, in order that our Parliament and that of Swabia may vote the necessary grants during this session."

"Will you give Fräulein Chowery the appointment I beg?" asked the Crown Prince, deliberately avoiding the main issue.

"No, Fritz; it would excite remark," answered the poor Queen, nervously; for when she resisted any of her Fritz's whims there was almost always a scene that made her weep. "But—but—don't be angry. You can get this English maiden placed in the household of your aunt Dorothea. That will be much better, for you will be able to see her there as often as you like without anybody talking scandal about it. Dorothea will be happy to serve you in the matter, as she is so good-natured."

"Will you speak to Aunt Dorothea about it?" asked the Crown Prince, who had already begun to scowl.

"Yes, Fritz, I will speak to Aunt Dorothea, if you promise to obey me about the marriage. The Queen would have promised anything to put her son into a good humour.

"Very well; as soon as Fräulein Chowery is settled at the Old Palace I will see about marrying Carolina," answered his Royal Highness, and thereupon gave his mother a kiss which made her glad for the rest of the day.

The good Queen of Gothia, therefore, arranged that little matter for him with the Princess Dorothea without her royal

conscience troubling her with the reproach that she was doing any wrong. The Princess Dorothea was a good-humoured plump widow of forty, the King's sister. She kept a small court of her own in the Old Palace of Altenstadt, and was understood to be a patron of the arts because she favoured good-looking tenors and young poets who wrote sonnets in her honour. She was not particularly fond of her nephew the Crown Prince, for he had been heard to say sarcastic things about her ; but this rendered her the more anxious not to incur his rancour by refusing the small favour he asked on behalf of his *protégée* Fräulein Chowery. In a few words the Queen explained to her how the wind lay, and her Royal Highness by a womanly twinkle showed that she understood. Accordingly a paper was signed appointing Mabel Chowery to be reader in ordinary to her Royal Highness at a salary of fifteen hundred thalers, and Baron von Kammerkel, the Princess's chamberlain, secretary, and most confidential adviser, a stalwart and chubby nobleman six feet high, was sent to the Colonel's lodgings to request that Mabel would attend at the Old Palace.

Since the ball Mabel had been perplexed and sad, though there was no change in her manner that could attract her parents' notice. Returning from the ball she had made up her mind that she would next day tell her mother all that had happened ; but next day it seemed to her that there was nothing to tell. The Prince had looked strangely at her, he had told her that he should never care to dance with any other girl again, and he had slightly squeezed her hand.

But what was there in that? Mabel knew that there was a great deal in it; but she might not be able to convey the same impression to her father and mother. They might say she was prudish and absurd. Colonel Chowery was not in a mood for hearing any evil spoken of the Gothian royal family, for on the day after the ball the King had graciously sent him a work on military tactics, and had begged him to draw up a report on his theories about open order in skirmishing, which report was to be submitted to the Gothian War-office. So the little Colonel was very busy with pen and paper, and that is why Mabel was afraid to trouble him with her story about how the Crown Prince had behaved.

When the Princess Dorothea's message arrived it was received by the Chowery family with gratified surprise as a signal mark of the royal favour. Mabel herself was greatly relieved and pleased. The position offered was such a respectable one, and then there was the salary, which to people circumstanced as the Chowerys were was no small consideration. But what pleased poor Mabel most was to think that since she was going to be admitted into the Princess Dorothea's household there could be no intention on the part of anybody at court to treat her slightly. Perhaps the Crown Prince was sorry for having made fun of her, and had helped to get her this post as an atonement. Thinking this might be the case, Mabel felt already disposed to forgive his Royal Highness.

Hasty preparations had to be made that Mabel might go

to the Old Palace with a suitable outfit. "What a lucky girl you are!" exclaimed the overjoyed Colonel. "You must have two new dresses, dear child," said Mrs. Chowery. Two days were devoted to shopping, and Mrs. Chowery made Mabel a present of all her spare trinkets, including her watch and chain, that she might appear as smartly as possible in her new situation. Privately both the Colonel and his wife indulged the idea that their daughter's fortune was made. She would probably make a fine marriage with a Gothian nobleman of wealth. There could be no question that she was a very lucky girl.

Mabel thought this too, during the first week of her sojourn in the palace, for she was treated with great kindness. She had a charming suite of rooms all to herself, and one of the Princess's maids to attend to her. The Princess called her "my dear child," and was very generous, for she gave her three new dresses as soon as she had ascertained what the extent of her wardrobe was. Mabel thought at first she would never know what to do with so many fine frocks. As to her duties, they were merely nominal. She breakfasted by herself, and was free to walk about the palace gardens, or do anything else she pleased, until noon, when she joined her mistress at luncheon. After luncheon the Princess used to go out for a drive, and Mabel accompanied her. On their return her Royal Highness took some *café au lait* and cakes, and talked scandal with Baron von Kammerkel, who retailed to her all the chit-chat of court and city.

While this was going on Mabel and a buxom maid of honour named Fräulein Louisa von Gluck used to take it in turns to play waltzes and galops on the piano. It was very seldom that the Princess asked Mabel to read to her, for her Royal Highness preferred French novels to all other literature, and she enjoyed these most when she read them herself. At five o'clock dinner was served, and at seven, on two nights a week, her Royal Highness took Mabel to the opera. On two other nights there used to be receptions at the Old Palace, and Mabel helped to do the honours to the Princess's guests. Altogether she had a very easy life of great dignity and liberty, for the servants showed her the utmost respect; her companion, Louisa von Gluck, took a strong liking to her; and Mabel had the privilege of receiving visits from her parents, brothers, and sisters in her own apartments as often as she liked.

But when Mabel had been a week at the palace the Crown Prince one evening dropped in to dinner unannounced; and from that henceforth he managed to come to the Old Palace every day on business of some sort. Sometimes he dropped in of a morning, in military undress uniform, switching a riding-whip; at other times he came late, in evening dress, with a broad blue ribbon across his waistcoat. He was careful about his appearance, and always anxious to please. He paid Mabel such marked attention that his visits became a torment. There were times when she was really frightened by the pertinacity of the Prince's attentions. She dared not raise her eyes lest they should meet his. If she shifted her

position, he changed his. If she went to the piano, he followed her and turned her music. At table he scarcely ate, but sat devouring her with his eyes.

The Princess Dorothea appeared to be utterly unconscious of what was going on, and it was this that made the trial so much the harder for Mabel to bear. So far from protecting Mabel, she frequently contrived to leave her and the Prince alone; but Mabel always foiled this move by retiring from the room as quickly as possible, without heeding whether she infringed etiquette or not. At last one evening the Princess, going to the opera, took Louisa with her and left Mabel at home.

"I expect some visitors," she said, as her gallant Chamberlain was helping her to put on her cloak. "Please entertain them till I return, and do not leave the drawing-room."

His Royal Highness arrived about half an hour after his aunt was gone. Mabel was seated at a table, turning over the leaves of an album, when he entered softly, unannounced. She raised her eyes, and saw him standing before her with his blue ribbon and star.

Starting up in affright, Mabel made her most formal courtesy, and was then going to withdraw: but he stopped her by standing between her and the door.

"Why do you always run away from me like that, Miss Chowery? Do I frighten you?"

"No—o, sir," faltered Mabel.

"You are the only woman who has ever fled from me.



"If she went to the piano, the Crown Prince followed her and turned her music."
Face p. 166.

and," added he, slowly, "you are the only woman for whose company I care."

"Your Royal Highness does me too much honour," murmured Mabel, retreating gradually till she had placed herself behind a chair.

"Don't call me 'sir' or 'Royal Highness;' I have enough of that from others. I am only a man when I stand before you, and I feel very small."

No answer from Mabel.

"I do not believe you care in the least who I am or what I say," continued the Prince, in a melancholy tone. "I wish, though, it were otherwise."

Still no answer.

"Will you not say a friendly word to me, Miss Chowery? You must know by this time what I feel toward you."

Mabel did reply then. Her heart beat, and she raised toward the Prince a glance that moved him strangely.

"I implore you, sir," she said, clasping her little hands, "to remember that I am only a poor girl. You can make me very miserable, and do me great injury. As a man of honour, I entreat you to leave me."

"You despise my love, then? I see you are trembling, and I frighten you. Mabel, listen to me one minute."

"No, no," said Mabel; and as the Prince advanced toward her, she turned the chair round, pushing it against him, and running to the door, darted out.

After this scene Mabel felt that she must consult her parents as to whether she ought to remain any longer at the

Old Palace. Her agitation was so painful that she could not delay an instant without seeking her mother. Hurriedly putting on a hat and cloak, she ordered a maid to accompany her, and went home. Two hours later, when the Princess Dorothea returned, expecting to find the Crown Prince and Mabel in the drawing-room, she found Colonel Chowery, who had called to apprise her Royal Highness of what had taken place, and to solicit explanations.

No pleasant errand was this for Colonel Chowery. Had there been any means of avoiding it, he would have done so ; but assuming Mabel's version of facts to be correct, she had been either grossly insulted or honoured in an extraordinary degree. Colonel Chowery, as her father, was bound to ascertain how the case stood, and he could only hope that the Princess Dorothea might be able to assure him that Mabel had been labouring under some delusion as to the meaning of the Prince's words.

This was, indeed, what her Royal Highness did say at once. She expressed well-acted astonishment, but had noticed of late that Mabel had been looking poorly, and was a little fanciful in her talk. Perhaps the sudden change in her habits had affected her nerves, and she had need of country air. In fact, the good Princess conveyed the idea that poor Mabel had possibly fallen in love with the Crown Prince, but that it was laughable to suppose that his Royal Highness, who, as all the world knew, was engaged to the Princess Carolina of Swabia, could have troubled his thoughts about Mabel.

Colonel Chowery at once saw the justice of this observation, and retired, feeling deeply ashamed of himself and his daughter. "Foolish girl," he muttered to himself, as he trudged home; and he was minded to read her a severe lecture on her folly. But Mabel had been put to bed when he reached the house, for the excitement of the evening had given her a nervous headache, so it was to his wife that the Colonel delivered his opinions as to the mischievous nature of the nonsense that had got into the girl's head.

"No one had ever heard such preposterous folly," he remarked. "The silly girl will have thrown away her position by this conduct, and perhaps have got us all into a scrape, too."

"But I don't think that what Mabel said was mere fancy," remarked Mrs. Chowery, who, with a mother's alarm, had a truer insight into the situation.

"Now, Maria, do be quiet," besought the Colonel. "I tell you this may prove a most awkward affair for us."

III.

THE Colonel was right, and, as it happened, the affair proved much more awkward than he had surmised, for, in the dead of that night, as he lay awake musing on all that happened, he was startled by a loud knock, and presently Mulehen, the cook, rapped at the door to say that three gentlemen of the police were waiting to see him. Huddling on his dressing-

gown and slippers, the Colonel went down, with no little trepidation depicted on his countenance. His visitors were Herr Starklaune, Chief of the Police in Altenstadt, and two subordinates. Herr Starklaune was a man with a cold, keen eye and a stiff grey moustache.

"I am very sorry to be the bearer of a disagreeable communication to you, Colonel," he said, dryly. "The orders of the government are that you leave the kingdom immediately."

"Who?" stammered the Colonel, dumbfounded.

"Not only you, but all your family, and especially your daughter Fräulein Mabel."

"Surely this is not owing to the Crown Prince?" remonstrated the Colonel. "I assure you, sir, my poor child has been unwell. I trust you will allow me time to explain this to their Majesties. We are really most grieved, Mrs. Chowery and I."

"I can allow you no time," was Herr Starklaune's answer. "You must all dress at once. Your baggage will be sent after you. I can let you take away no papers. Nothing, in fact, except the clothes you wear. Those are my orders. Be quick, if you please, for two carriages are waiting for you."

Expostulation was useless. The Colonel had to rouse his wife and children; and as soon as they were dressed they were hurried, wondering and shivering, for it was a bitterly cold night, into the carriages, which drove them to a railway station ten miles outside the capital. All the way Mabel

cried, and the Colonel kept moaning, "Wretched girl, see what you have brought upon us by your folly!"

This summary expulsion of the Chowerys from Gothia was due to a very simple cause. The Crown Prince, after leaving Mabel, had gone to the royal palace and declared to his father and mother that he would not marry the Princess Carolina of Swabia. He was in love with the Fräulein Chowery, and nobody else should be his wife.

The good Queen of Gothia wept, and the King of Gothia stormed. He had great cause for dissatisfaction in the conduct of his heir, who had lately been very remiss in his military duties, insomuch that the First Regiment of Hussars, of which his Royal Highness was Colonel, were leading quite easy and pleasant lives—a thing never before known in the service.

"I'll put you into another regiment, and send you to command the garrison of a fortress," cried his Majesty, shaking his fist. "Now go to your palace, and consider yourself under arrest until my good pleasure is known."

Naturally the Crown Prince obeyed; but there was that in his manner of obeying which showed that he was not to be shaken from the projects he had conceived toward Fräulein Chowery. He had been accustomed to have his own way in everything, generally without difficulty, and Mabel was the only girl who had ever withstood him. This made her the more worth winning. His Royal Highness was persuaded that there could be no more happiness for him in life unless Mabel became his left-handed consort,

and having betaken himself to his palace, he wrote her a respectful and well-turned letter expressive of his honourable intentions.

Meanwhile his royal papa and mamma had in dismay sent for Baron von Stolz, the Prime Minister, whose advice they besought in a matter which was of such sovereign importance to the dynasty and to the State of Gothia. The Prime Minister was quite as much scandalised as the King and Queen, but being a statesman of prompt action, he at once advised that the Chowerys should be expelled from the country, and that the Crown Prince should be dispatched to the Court of Swabia without delay. Baron von Stolz did not believe in the eternity of love affairs between princes and pretty damsels of inferior station, and, besides, he had his political reasons for wishing to see Prince Fritz marry the daughter of the King of Swabia. Gothia and Swabia had not of late been living on quite such friendly terms as was desirable, and it was to be feared that there was some project afoot for concluding an alliance between Swabia and Westphalia, in which case Gothia would find itself in a minority in the German Diet. The Diet still flourished in those days, and Gothia, thanks to the able policy of Baron von Stolz in managing alliances, had a paramount influence there, but this influence could only be maintained if Prince Fritz and the Princess Carolina, who did not care a pin for each other, became man and wife. Therefore the Chowerys were expelled from Gothia, as we have seen, and Baron von Stolz went to bed appeased.

The Crown Prince had also retired to rest, well satisfied, after writing his letter to Mabel, and the first thing he did next morning upon rising was to send that epistle to the Blumenstrasse by one of his equerries. You may imagine his Royal Highness's feelings when the equerry returned in an hour saying that he had found the Chowerys' house in the possession of the police, who were overlooking papers and packing trunks. Herr Starklaune was superintending these operations in person, and he had told the equerry that all the Chowerys, including the Fräulein, had been exiled by "superior order."

Prince Fritz had a royal habit of swearing when little things put him out, but on this occasion his language was really so strong that it was a wonder where he could have learned the startling words he used. He was even more awful to behold, however, when he grew calmer, for his complexion remained livid with rage, and he took a terrible oath not to be dissuaded from his purpose by anything which the wrath of his parents or the craft of statesmen could devise against him.

"This is a trick of Von Stolz's," exclaimed his Royal Highness, shaking both his fists. "But I'll be even with him. I'll join the Opposition."

And this significant threat, reaching Baron von Stolz's ears the same evening, was, of course, destined to have a vital effect on Gothian politics, for till then Prince Fritz had belonged to the party which was in power, whereas if he now lent his countenance to Baron von Zweifelwitz, who

headed the Opposition, Baron von Stolz was likely to have some difficult work cut out for him.

But it was not enough to anathematize Von Stolz: the Crown Prince had to evince his spirit by action. He first dashed off a letter to the Swabian Ambassador apprising his Excellency that it was not his intention to sue for the Princess Carolina's hand, as his affections were engaged elsewhere. No such indiscreet letter was ever penned by a Crown Prince, for, as every one will admit, a communication of such a nature as this ought to have been couched in the proper diplomatic terms of circuitous periphrases, and it ought to have been forwarded through Von Stolz. The Prince must have known that in telling the Ambassador that he did not mean to marry the daughter of his Excellency's master he was inflicting a slight upon the whole nation of Swabia, from the King on his throne to the lowest costermonger on his donkey-cart, and that, under such circumstances, the Ambassador would feel bound instantly to demand his passports.

* But the Crown Prince was not in the least concerned about the Ambassador's demanding his passports, for the only person on earth of whom he was thinking just then was Mabel. Having sent off his letter, his Royal Highness ordered his confidential valet to pack him a portmanteau, cash him a cheque, and be ready to start with him on a journey in an hour. At the time appointed the Crown Prince committed the unpardonable offence of breaking his arrest: he and his valet left Altenstadt together privately,

and before it was known that they had decamped, the express that carried them was over the frontier. That same night his Royal Highness crossed the Channel by the Ostend packet, and was very sick ; so was his valet. Toward six in the morning they reached London, and alighted at Claridge's Hotel, where, as his Highness was travelling *incognito*, he gave his name as Count von Altenstadt.



IV.

THE Prince had not the least idea as to where he could find the Chowerys; but he recollected having heard that the Colonel was a member of the Army and Navy Club, so when he had dressed and breakfasted he ordered a brougham round and drove to Pall Mall. Fortune was kind to him, for the very first person he saw in descending from his carriage was Colonel Chowery coming down the steps of the club, opening some letters. The little Colonel, who was looking very miserable, started at the sight of Prince Fritz as if he doubted his own senses.

"How do you do, Colonel?" said the Crown Prince, politely lifting his hat. "I heard yesterday of the indignity that had been put upon you, and I have hastened to England to express my utmost concern, and to offer you my sincerest apologies for what has happened." How sweet are the words of princes! Colonel Chowery, who had been cursing Prince Fritz all the way from Gothia, was almost moved to tears.

"It's very good of you, sir," he whimpered. "Will you do me the honour of walking in? It was a great trouble to us all to think that their Majesties were offended."

"I hope at least you acquitted *me* of all share in your expulsion."

"Of course, sir, I knew that your Royal Highness would

not put any unfavourable construction on my poor child's actions."

"Colonel Chowery, let me speak out the truth frankly: I love your daughter."

"Oh, sir, you do her a great honour; but—"

"There is no 'but' about it. If you will give your consent, I want Miss Mabel to become my wife."

"Is your Royal Highness speaking seriously?"

Colonel Chowery pronounced the words "your Royal Highness" rather louder than he need have done, for his friend General Brown, a great respecter of persons, was within ear-shot just then. The Prince and the Colonel were passing through the hall of the club. "I am so far serious," said his Royal Highness, as they walked into a private room, "that I will call on Miss Chowery this very day to make my offer. You are staying in London?"

The Colonel was too much flurried to have any clear perception of what was said to him. He was asking himself whether it could be possible that his Mabel was going to be a Queen. So the Prince had to repeat his question.

"Yes, sir; we arrived in London yesterday," answered the Colonel.

"At what hotel are you staying?"

"At the—Clarendon."

This, of course, was a figment. The Chowerys had put up at a small family hotel in Craven Street, close to Charing Cross, but the Colonel saw that if his Royal Highness was going to call with a matrimonial object in view he must be

received in state, and so he resolved to remove to the Clarendon without loss of time. He and the Prince remained talking anxiously together for nearly an hour, and then his Royal Highness left, promising to call and lunch at the Clarendon punctually at one. The little Colonel thereupon hurried back to Craven Street as fast as a hansom could carry him. He was in a more excited state than if he had been on active service again and was about to engage in some battle.

This was all very well; but, as may be imagined, the Crown Prince's escapade had produced a sensation something like the explosion of a bomb at the Gothian Court, and wild telegrams were being wired about in all directions. Poor little innocent Mabel was causing ever so many distinguished personages in different parts of Europe to put their wits and legs in violent motion.

First came a telegram from the Gothian Court to the Queen of England, at Windsor, explaining the grievous thing that had happened, and praying her Majesty to exert her authority that Prince Fritz might be packed home (the Queen being in Scotland, this message was forwarded to Balmoral); second, came a telegram from Baron von Stolz to Count von Schinkenspeise, the Gothian Minister in London, explaining facts, and ordering that his Excellency should exert his influence, &c.; third, a message from Balmoral to Altenstadt, conveying sympathy, and promising prompt action; fourth, a message from Balmoral to one of the royal princes in London, commanding him to ascertain

where Prince Fritz was, to call upon him, exert influence, &c.; fifth, ditto from Balmoral to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, explaining facts, and commanding him to use influence, &c.; sixth, a message from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to Sir Passmore Stoley, the British Minister at Altenstadt, requesting a full report of all that had occurred; seventh, eighth, and ninth, notes from the Gothian Minister, the Secretary of Foreign Office, and the Royal Prince to the Chief Commissioner of Police, demanding that the address of Prince Fritz should instantly be found; tenth, a note from Secretary of Foreign Office to the War Office, asking for information about Colonel Chowery; eleventh, an identical note from the War Office to the India Office propounding the same question; twelfth, a note from the India Office giving a list of Colonel Chowery's services.

Then there were runnings to and fro, as follows: Six detectives started from Scotland Yard to scour the principal hotels. The Chief Commissioner called at Marlborough House, in Downing Street, and at the Gothian Legation. The Royal Prince and the Gothian Minister called at Scotland Yard. The Secretary of Foreign Office, the Royal Prince, and the Gothian Minister all called at Claridge's Hotel, and missed the Crown Prince, who was out. These three exalted persons subsequently called on one another, and missed one another. The Chief Commissioner had an interview with the manager of Claridge's. The Secretary of Foreign Office had an interview with the Prime Minister. The Crown Prince's valet had interviews with everybody.

In the upshot it was ascertained that the Crown Prince had gone to the Clarendon, but his Royal Highness had been there some hours before this discovery was made. He had lunched with the Chowerys, he had spent the afternoon with them, and he intended to stay for dinner and spend the evening. Poor Mabel had been much agitated by this visit, for after having been scolded over several hundreds of miles of railway travelling about "her foolish conduct" toward the Crown Prince, she was disposed to look with terror upon his Royal Highness.

Yesterday her parents were abusing the Prince and her together; to-day they were for throwing her into his arms. Her father and mother had told her that the Prince meant to propose marriage, and they had loaded her with caresses on the strength of her brilliant new prospects. But Mabel felt giddy at the mere idea of marrying a Crown Prince. She could not realise it, and trembled all the afternoon in his presence. At last, toward dusk, her parents left her alone with the Prince, and she sat by the fire, whose fitful light flickered on her face, too nervous to speak or move. She would have given anything for an excuse to fly, but this time there was no running away.

"Listen to me, dear Mabel," said the Prince, taking both her hands and gazing ardently into her face. "I have come to England to ask you to be my wife."

"I am not fitted to be a queen, sir," she answered, with a weak attempt at a smile.

"You would make an adorable queen," cried the Prince

who did not see fit as yet to explain that she was only to be a morganatic spouse. "I do not frighten you, do I?"

"Yes, sir, you do," she replied, with rueful frankness.

"Why, am I so very terrible?" and he smiled.

She laughed slightly too, to give herself a countenance.

"What I mean is that you are so much above me, sir."

"But if I raise you to my side, and love you with my whole heart, all my life long!"

"You could not; your parents would not allow it."

"Must I ask their permission to love? My dear child, I am my own master, and I prove it by my demand. Will you marry me?"

"Oh, sir, will you not give me a little time to consider?" prayed Mabel, in her distress.

"Of course I will, my darling little one," answered the generous Prince. "You shall have any amount of time. How much do you want? Half an hour; an hour?"

"Oh, sir, I was thinking of months and months—or at least weeks."

"Months! weeks!" echoed the Prince. "Why, Mabel, feel my heart;" and so saying, he drew her little hand to his waistcoat. "See how it thumps. Do you think I could wait for weeks? To do so would kill me. No, my precious one; say 'Yes' to me at once. Breathe it in my ear as I kiss you tenderly. Eh?—eh?" and encircling her waist with his arm, the Prince drew Mabel's head on to his shoulder and kissed her fervently a good many times, leaving her no power of resistance.

He had reached this interesting crisis in his love affair when the door opened, and Colonel Chowery walked in quickly to say that the Gothian Minister had called and craved an audience of his Royal Highness. The Prince and Mabel had sprung apart, and Mabel was blushing a good deal.

"I—I wish Count von Schinkenspeise would have better manners than to dog me to the houses of my private friends," cried the Prince, angrily.

"Perhaps your Royal Highness had better see his Excellency," suggested the Colonel. "He says that he has an important dispatch from Altenstadt to communicate."

"Very well, I will see him. Excuse me for a moment, dear Mabel. I will not be away long;" and gracefully lifting the girl's hand to his lips, he kissed it whilst her father stood by, and then left the room.

But he was scarcely gone when the Colonel, who was in a very fidgety state, and looked quite upset, said: "Now, Mabel, dear, go off quickly to your room. I'll send for you when I want you."

"Has anything happened, papa?" inquired Mabel, astonished.

"Yes—at least no. If anything happens I will tell you. Run off now, there's a good child."

"But, papa, if the Prince returns?"

"Never mind the Prince;" and the little Colonel was in such haste to see his daughter go that he almost pushed her out of the room.

"I wonder what's up now?" mused Mabel, as she retreated to her chamber. "At one moment I am scolded because the Prince makes love to me, then I am told that he is to be my husband, and now papa says I am not to mind him."

And Mabel concluded that this was a funny world.

V.

MABEL never knew for certain what passed on that eventful evening; at all events, she did not see the Prince. Nor did she see him on the next day, or for the six days following. During this time Colonel Chowery was continually on the move. He wore his best clothes; he was mysterious; broughams called for him at the Clarendon at all sorts of odd hours and fetched him away. When he saw Mabel he patted her head and kissed her, but vouchsafed no explanation as to what he was doing. Mrs. Chowery of course knew what was going on, but she was as reticent as her husband.

The truth is that Colonel Chowery, thanks to his pretty daughter, had become an important person. The Courts of England and Gothia and the Foreign Offices of those two states were exerting their influence upon him. The little man had frequent interviews with Lord Baxtayre, an astute and well-bred nobleman connected with the Government, whose business it was in this affair to convey remonstrances, arguments, threats, compliments, and promises unofficially

to the Colonel, turn by turn, as they might serve his purpose. Naturally his lordship made use of remonstrances and threats so long as it was hoped the Prince might be induced to return quietly to his native land and forget Mabel. Lord Baxtayre spoke haughtily to the Colonel, and reminded him that it was his duty as an officer and a gentleman not to encourage a suit which could lead to no creditable results, but only to complications, political and social, of a very troublesome character. Unfortunately Colonel Chowery stood in such a position that he had no longer anything to fear from soul alive. A week previously had he been threatened with expulsion from Gothia, the dread of such a fate would have rendered him cautious, but now that he had been expelled, what more could be done to him? He had been subjected to great annoyance and pecuniary loss, and feeling how very strong his position had become on this account, the little man was not disposed to eat humble pie before Lord Baxtayre.

"You must not presume to lecture me, my lord," said he, with some dignity. "The Gothian Government owes me apology and compensation for the wrong that was done to me. It is not my fault if the Crown Prince chooses to love my daughter."

"He would degrade your daughter, sir," responded his lordship.

"I don't see how that can be, since he offers to marry her."

"Pooh! a morganatic marriage! However, I have warned you for your own good. You must do as you please."

This was the substance of what passed between the Colonel and Lord Baxtayre at their first two interviews ; but the Crown Prince positively refused to budge from England, and then the business assumed a much more serious complexion. His Royal Highness was virtually kept a prisoner at Claridge's. The Royal Prince, the Gothian Minister, the Secretary of Foreign Office saw him daily, and exhausted their ingenuity in trying to make him hear reason. The Gothian Court Chamberlain, Count von Schmeikelmund, and two Gothian generals had come over to reason with him, and the Prince found it impossible to leave his hotel without being followed. But such a state of things as this could not last for ever. The Gothian Court, who had but hazy notions of English institutions, were telegraphing frantically to know whether Colonel Chowery and his daughter could not be clapped into the Tower, and the British Government were fain to answer that this could not be done. Why had not the Gothian Government rather put the whole Chowery family into some Gothian fortress ? From the first the astute Lord Baxtayre declared that this was the course that ought to have been taken.

"That expulsion was a most hopeless blunder," said his lordship. "It just set these wretched Chowerys free to bark and howl all over the place. The Colonel is a most intractable subject. What on earth is to be done ?"

What, indeed ? A week after the Crown Prince's arrival in England the serious news came that popular demonstrations were being organised in Altenstadt. The Swabian

Minister having asked for his passports, a belief had arisen that Baron von Stolz's Government were going to declare war against Swabia, and Baron von Zweifelwitz, the leader of the Opposition, was stirring up the populace to shout for a summoning of Parliament and the downfall of the Stolz ministry. The situation was most perilous. The alarmed King of Gothia apprehended a revolution, and wrote saying that the overthrow of Von Stolz was just the step most likely to precipitate the war with Swabia which the Opposition affected to dread, and there was no saying but that a war with Swabia might lead to a general conflagration. Now at this prospect the whole English Ministry quaked in their seats. They had no wish for a European war. Foreign policy was not their strong point. What was to be done? It was evident that Colonel Chowery held the fate of Europe in his hands.

"We must get this man and his brood out of the way," said Lord Baxtayre, plainly, to one of the Ministers. "Couldn't you give him a Colonial Governorship? The Backward Isles are vacant."

"Do you think that would satisfy him?" asked the Minister.

"You might promise to knight him when he had been out there two years. Then he must have a pecuniary compensation, and an apology from the King of Gothia."

"How much compensation?"

"The King of Gothia must pay that. I suppose he would give ten thousand pounds to see this matter settled."

"Ten thousand pounds is a large sum."

"I shall begin by offering five only, and I shall make everything contingent on Miss Chowery telling the Prince flatly that she rejects his addresses. On those terms I think his Royal Highness would toddle."

"For Heaven's sake do that, then!" cried the Minister, anxiously. "Go at once, Baxtayre, and if you succeed we'll never forget it."

"Not when you give away the next Garter?" asked his lordship, with a smile.

"The next Garter shall be yours," was the eager response of the nervously anxious minister. "But please go; don't lose a minute."

So Lord Baxtayre went. This time he was as pleasant as possible with Colonel Chowery. He used no threats. He spoke in whispers. He was insinuating, and finally he triumphed; for when he left the Clarendon he had got the Colonel to accept the Governorship of the Backward Isles, an indemnity of £10,000, and an apology from the Gothian Government, in return for which he (the Colonel) was to arrange that his daughter should dismiss the Crown Prince of Gothia from her for ever.

The little Colonel rubbed his hands when Lord Baxtayre was gone, and he sent for Mabel.

"Come here, my dear," he said, "and attend to my instructions. The Crown Prince is coming to see you this evening. You must be very cold to him, and tell him that you refuse to become his wife."

"But papa, you told me to say just the contrary a week ago."

"Never mind what I said then. You assured me yourself that you had no love for the Prince. I hope you were not so deceitful as to tell me an untruth."

"No, papa; but——"

"But if you don't love him you can't wish to marry him. That's clear."

"I was going to say, papa—that—I had not had time to think on the matter."

"Reason the more why I should think for you. Now are you going to be a good girl, and do as you are told?"

"Oh yes, papa; but I do hope you won't come to me next week and scold me for having obeyed you."

"I am sure you are a very foolish child," replied the little Colonel.

You may guess the epilogue of this story. The Crown Prince returned crestfallen to Altenstadt, and Colonel Chowery went off to the Backward Isles with his family. He is now Sir Victor Chowery, and his daughter Mabel is married to a Captain Bellair, who was for a time in the garrison of the islands. The Crown Prince of Gothia married the Princess Carolina of Swabia after all; but his Royal Highness's love affair was no such passing fancy as his parents had thought, for when he heard of Mabel's marriage he sent her a very beautiful bracelet, with one single word incrusting on it in diamonds: "Vergissmeinnicht."



IN A PARISIAN GAOL :

A HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE.

[The facts of the following narrative were given to me by a young Englishman in Paris, and I have endeavoured to relate them in his own words. The story is not an imaginary one.]

I.

I SHALL be careful how I make the acquaintance of pleasant strangers in travelling, after the adventure which occurred to me this year in France.

I am a London merchant, but my visit to Paris was not connected with business. I simply went over for a week's holiday at Easter time. Stepping into a first-class carriage of the morning mail train at Charing Cross, I soon found myself joined by three travelling companions, two gentlemen and a lady, who was extremely pretty and seemed to be the wife of the younger and handsomer of the two men.

The train had scarcely started when the lady wanted a penknife to cut the string of a parcel. Her companions searched their pockets, but had not got such a thing : so I lent mine, and this led to our conversing on very friendly terms for the rest of the journey. Everybody knows how much a journey is shortened by agreeable company ; and these companions of mine were as amiable, intelligent, and talkative as one could desire. They spoke good English, with a foreign accent which I believed to be French, for I am not enough of a linguist to detect the different tones of foreign pronunciation. By-and-bye they stated that they were French and lived at Marseilles. The younger man, who was tall and fair-haired, with a light, waxed moustache, said that he was a civil engineer. His age appeared to be twenty-five. The other, whom he mentioned as his wife's brother, was a few years older : he wore a dark beard and described himself as a physician.

They had been to England, as I understood, on some sanitary mission connected with drainage ; and spoke with lively gratification of the pleasant month they had spent there. Their praise of our country and its people was just

of the kind which it is most flattering to an Englishman to hear; and I was greatly struck by the shrewdness with which they had studied our institutions and manners, making observations at once amusing and novel, but always to our advantage. The lady had been delighted with English scenery; the cleanliness of houses; the fresh, healthy looks of our peasantry; the luxury of some of our theatres, and the beauty of our girls everywhere.

We had a quick passage to Calais; but the sea was a little rough, so I was the only one of our party who remained on deck. I met my new friends again in the refreshment-room at Calais and heard good-humoured accounts of how they had suffered from that horrid *mal de mer*. The lady was now somewhat encumbered with parcels, having opened an over-full valise in her cabin which she had been unable to re-pack properly, and this had obliged her to secrete packets in all her pockets and in those of her husband and brother. As it transpired that we were all bound for the Grand Hotel in Paris, she asked me, with a sweet smile, whether I should object to putting one or two of these encumbrances in my own travelling-bag, which she noticed was large and only half filled? How could I object to render so small a service? The request was made the more plausible by the fair stranger explaining what the contents of the parcels were.

“My husband and brother have burdened me with a number of specimens of new drainage piping,” she said, with a laugh; “my valise was made so heavy with them that I

could not lift it." She then handed me four parcels wrapped in brown paper and of great weight; and whilst I was stowing them away her husband said something about a new system of drainage that was being tried by means of pipes jointed like a lobster's tail.

Our journey proceeded without incident, but with abundant flow of talk, to Paris, which we reached at about six o'clock. At the door outside the room where passengers wait to have their luggage examined a gentleman was standing, who accosted my friends, shook hands with them, and spoke a few words in a low tone. All four then disappeared in the crowd; and I looked in vain for them during a quarter of an hour. But just as I was clearing my luggage the doctor appeared, looking rather excited, and said that he was summoned to see a friend of his sister's who was ill. His sister and brother-in-law were going with him, and would not be able to proceed to the hotel for an hour or two. Would I do them the favour of retaining rooms for them? and he handed me two cards—his own, with the name "DR. TOCONNIER," and another inscribed "ARMAND D'ORTRELLES." I promised to do what the doctor desired, and he left me with profuse thanks.

I had observed nothing suspicious in his manner. His slight excitement was sufficiently accounted for by the alleged illness of the friend he was going to see; so I drove to the hotel without thinking much about him, retained rooms, and, having changed my clothes, went down into the restaurant of the hotel and dined.

I dined at a private table, and had just finished when a waiter came and said that a gentleman wanted to speak to me. He was closely followed by a small, grey-headed official-looking personage with a red ribbon in his button-hole, who sat down beside me, rather unceremoniously, after making a slight bow, and whispered,

"Your name is Johnson, is it not?"

"Yes, it is."

"Would you come with me then, if you please? I have some information to ask of you."

"Cannot I give you the information here?" I asked, astonished.

"Impossible; I am a Commissaire of Police: it is the Prefect of Police himself that wants to question you."

"Do you mean to say you arrest me?" I said, looking as disconcerted, I suppose, as people generally do under such circumstances.

"Oh no, not arrested—not that," answered the Commissaire, shaking his head. He spoke in Frenchified English, and had some trouble in expressing himself. "You will be back here in half-an-hour, I promise."


"Stop a minute! Johnson is a very common name," I remarked; "this must surely be a case of mistaken identity."

The Commissaire seemed not to understand, for he first said, "Oui, oui," and then, "Non, non," and added that a "voiture" was waiting. I followed him out of the room, took my hat and overcoat from the cloak-room, and walked out on to the terrace of the hotel court-yard. A cab was

standing at the foot of the steps, and a tall man in plain clothes, whom I presume was a detective, opened the door. We got in ; the detective climbed on the box beside the coachman, and away we drove.

It did not occur to me to associate this strange adventure with the acquaintance I had made in travelling from London. I thought that some pickpocket of the name of Johnson must have been distinguishing himself in Paris, and that I had been taken up in his place. I had in my pocket-book, however, a passport, my cards, some business letters, and a circular note from a well-known bank, which were documents enough to establish my identity ; and so I felt as yet no uneasiness. The Commissaire could, or would, give me no information as to the charge on which my namesake was wanted. He kept on saying, "Oui, oui ; learn all immediately," and then relapsed into silence.

Our drive lasted about a quarter-of-an-hour. We crossed the Seine, passed along the quays, and drew up outside an archway in the Préfecture, or central police-office, adjoining the Palace of Justice. We went by a sentry, and I was conducted into a large room with a grated window, where the Commissaire left me in the custody of two detectives, quite young men, with dirty linen and hands. There I remained for an hour. I frequently asked my gaolers when I should see the Prefect, but all I could understand of their answers was "Patience." They yawned all the time, cracked their knuckles, and occasionally made remarks, in which I could overhear the words, "Spik



Engleesh," which seemed to cause them considerable amusement.

At last a policeman in uniform called us out, and I was led through about half-a-mile of passages, staircases, and court-yards to a finely-furnished office-room, commanding a magnificent view of the Seine. Here, at a table loaded with papers, sat a little white-haired, wizened, consequential man, who eyed me very keenly through a pair of double eye-glasses, perched almost on the point of his nose. He was not the Prefect, but a very high official among criminal hunters.

"Vous vous nommez Johnsonne?" he said, scrutinizing a paper, which had been handed to him by one of my conductors.

"Yes: do you speak English?" I asked.

"Yes, I comprehend him a leetle—all right; never fear."

And to my unspeakable dismay I saw that this old man could not make out a word of what I said. He put his signature to the paper he had read, handed it to one of the detectives, and once more I was marched away through the court-yards, staircases, and corridors.

This time we came to a halt opposite a large door, whose upper panels were of ground glass, protected by bars. A bell was rung, and I was introduced into a spacious hall, where several warders in black tunics with pewter buttons were marshalling rows of vagabonds and malefactors on different wooden benches. Those who were better dressed

than the majority were set on benches apart. One of the warders, having surveyed my appearance, put me on a bench by myself; and picking half a brown loaf from a basket, thrust it into my hands. The next moment my name was called; I was beckoned into a small room, and a couple of warders ordered me by words and gestures to undress. I protested; but I might as well have whistled. One of the pair removed my hat and pulled out the lining, the other unbuttoned my waistcoat; I was made to strip off everything, and when I stood quite unclothed each article I had been wearing was carefully overhauled, shaken out, and squeezed. I was next measured, and one of the warders wrote down a minute description of me, turning my eyes to the light, lifting my upper lip like a horse's to see my teeth, and closely inspecting my limbs to discover any peculiar marks they might bear. This delightful formality over, I was told to dress again; and most of my portable property was restored to me. I was allowed to keep my watch; chain, ring, and pencil-case, and twenty francs with some loose silver out of the two hundred francs in my pocket-book; but my passport, all my private papers, and my penknife were confiscated.

I was still huddling on my garments in no very placable frame of mind, when my name was again bawled, and I was quickly shoved, with my half-loaf under my arm, through the large hall into another room, where at four tables sat four clerks. A wooden rail divided the room, and prisoners were being introduced by twos and threes under

the escort of two republican guardsmen, or municipal gendarmes, wearing shakos and side-arms.

I was by this time alarmed and furious at the treatment I had undergone ; so I inquired in a loud voice whether there was not one of the four clerks who understood my tongue and could tell me with what I was charged. One of the clerks did speak a little English, just enough to give himself airs. He was a dirty man (but they were all dirty), of middle age, with a bald head, a sallow face and a mangy black beard.

“ Did zey not tell you vy you was arrested ? ” he asked. “ Ah, vell, you will learn to-morrow.”

“ To-morrow ! But I want to be liberated immediately. Let me have an interpreter. I have been arrested by mistake ; I can give bail for my appearance if wanted.”

“ Yes, yes, to-morrow ! ” interposed the clerk, nodding his head.

“ But you have no right to detain me without informing me of the charge against me. Let me send to the British Embassy. I am an Englishman, and protest against the indignities I have suffered.”

The clerk shrugged his shoulders, as if I were talking like a fool. He put to me some questions about my name, age, occupation, and the names of my parents ; and requested me to sign the paper on which he had written my answers. But this I declined to do ; I would sign nothing until I was fairly treated. The clerk shrugged his shoulders again, saying it was of little consequence ; and I was pulled



away to make room for a refractory habitué of the Police Dépôt. It seems I had been brought to the Préfecture just at the time when one of the deliveries of prisoners from the different metropolitan police-stations was taking place. Three times a day a dozen prison vans go the round of the eighty police-stations and collect the "charges" for transfer to the Detention House at the Central Police Dépôt.

A tin counter with a number on it was thrust into my hand, and I was hurried through a door into a prison ward,

where there were two stories of cells. Everything was done in a hurry, and with an unnecessary amount of screaming, stamping, and gesticulation. Petty French officials seem to think they can only assert their dignity by behaving as noisily as English madmen. I was made to ascend to the first-floor gallery, and delivered up my tin counter, which proved to be a ticket of admission to cell No. 51. It was a filthy cell. I had visited model prisons in England, and had always been struck by the cleanliness of whitewashed walls; but here there was no whitewash. The walls were painted a dark brown, greasy with finger-marks, spirts of tobacco juice and other filth, and scrabbled over with hundreds of names and inscriptions. The furniture consisted of a dirty bed with a small mattress, a small table, and a rush-bottomed chair. Above the table was a gas jet.

The warder who introduced me to this den appeared to be a good-natured fellow, and did his best by dumb-show to inform me that I must pull a chain near the door if I wanted anything; and that I must pay forty centimes for the use of a pair of coarse sheets which he produced. I signified that I should like to write; but he shook his head, and said, "Bonne nuit," with a grin, and locked me up, leaving a trap in the door open, that he might observe my movements from the outside.

Here was a pretty beginning to a holiday in Paris! I sat on the bed, feeling as if I had learned an experience of French manners and customs that would last me for a lifetime. Thinking, however, that I was the victim of a police

error, I was chiefly indignant at the ignorance and obtuseness displayed by the officials with whom I had been brought in contact; and I thought it monstrous that at a place like this big Préfecture there should be no interpreter on duty to enlighten foreign prisoners as to their position.

But presently I asked myself whether a Frenchman arrested in London would be likely to fare better than I had done? I imagined the case of a French gentleman apprehended at an hotel in the evening on a wrong charge; and I was fain to own that such a one would probably meet with but little intelligence or French speaking from an English police-sergeant on night duty. This thought imbued me with resignation; and, being ignorant of French procedure, I supposed that I should be brought up before a magistrate in a public court on the morrow, and upon proof of my identity be discharged with many apologies. So there was no need to break my heart about spending one night in durance.

With these reflections and some casual meditations on the inconvenience of owning such a name as Johnson, I soon fell asleep.





THE JUGE D'INSTRUCTION.

II.

I WAS awakened at six o'clock by the loud ring of a bell and a noisy clattering of feet down some stairs, with a great deal of shouting and laughing. Rubbing my eyes and recollecting that I was in a prison cell, my first impulse was not to bemoan my fate, but to think of the many poor wretches who must have slept in my bed before with the prospect of having to spend years, perhaps their whole lives, in prison.

There was a pitcher of water in the cell and an earthenware basin for ablutions, but no soap or towel. As I was dressing I heard the babbling and laughing of a large crowd in a yard under my window; but the window was out of reach, so that I could not see through it: I subsequently learned that vagabonds and petty thieves brought to the Préfecture are not confined in separate cells, but herded together at night in a large hall, where they sleep on plank beds. By day, if the weather be fine, they are turned into



a yard. The yelling among them was incessant, and there seemed to be no warder to keep them in order.

Reckoning by English customs, I supposed I should be taken before the magistrate at about ten o'clock ; but I was not without hopes that the mistake about me would be discovered sooner. Every time a warder came to my door I expected release ; but a dozen of these hopeful alarms occurred without bringing the wished-for result. First, a brown loaf of two pounds' weight was thrust on the ledge inside the trap of the door ; next my cell was opened, and the provision of water in my pitcher was renewed. After this a man in plain clothes put his head at the tray, screamed "Commissionnaire !" and asked if I would have some coffee. On receiving an affirmative answer, he filled me a bowl with *café au lait*, passed me in three lumps of sugar, a roll and a pat of butter, and charged me sixty centimes. I had to butter my bread and stir the coffee with a wooden spoon, for there was no other table-implement in the cell. Soon afterwards a hair-dresser came, calling, "Coiffeur !" and passed his forefinger over his chin to intimate that he was willing to shave me. I nodded ; and he entered the cell, accompanied by a warder, who remained present during his operations. The barber had a stock of perfumery, combs, soap, and towels. I bought a cake of soap for fifty centimes, and borrowed a towel to wash my hands properly. The franc I gave him seemed to satisfy him amply, for he said, "Bon jour, monsieur," bowed politely, and vanished.

From this moment until ten o'clock the time seemed to creep on all fours. I walked up and down the cell, examined the inscriptions on the walls, counted them, looked at my watch every five minutes, and finally played a game of tossing heads and tails for francs with a dummy. At about ten I was called out and directed to go downstairs, "Vite! vite!" the warder clapping his hands as he gave the order. But all this haste only led to my having to stand for half-an-hour in a line with a dozen prisoners, one of whom was respectably dressed, but all the rest villainous. Warders kept walking to and fro, staring at us, and they were all snappish and brutal when addressed. The other prisoners talked aloud, but I did not exchange a word with anybody, and was at length called into a room, where a clerk, sitting alone, and full of importance, asked me my name, address, and so forth, just as if I had not supplied this information to half-a-dozen officials already. I have no idea who the man was; but when he had finished questioning me I was sped back to my cell at the double "Vite! vite!" with the usual stamping of the warders' feet.

To shorten my story, it was not until half-past three that I was summoned to appear before the Juge d'Instruction, or examining magistrate. I ran downstairs, was taken into custody by a tall gendarme, and feeling now very ill-tempered at this long and needless delay, was led, not into a public court, as I had expected, but into a private room. The magistrate was alone there with his secretary. He was a tall, stout, red-whiskered man of about thirty-five, and

smoked a cigarette. The glance which he cast at me was anything but reassuring. Finding, however, that I could not speak French he remanded me for an hour whilst an interpreter was sent for, and I was taken into a flagged vestibule, where I had to kick my heels about for an hour upon a bench on which a number of other prisoners were waiting their turns for examination. I was now growing so exasperated that all sorts of wild projects for complaints to the British Ambassador, actions to recover damages, &c., were bubbling in my mind ; but my greatest misery came from not being able to obtain consolation or counsel from a soul. "Let me only hope the interpreter will be able to speak English," I said to myself, and not without considerable misgiving.

My fears were to be realised to an extent really grotesque. On returning to the magistrate's room, I was told to sit down, and I was put into communication with an interpreter, who was a Frenchman. It seems that if the French Government were to appoint a foreigner to any salaried post, there would be an outcry among the natives ; and yet it is obvious that an interpreter should belong, whenever possible, to the same country as the prisoner, for otherwise he can seldom thoroughly understand the latter's account of himself, his references to localities, habits, customs, &c. Germans may be trusted to interpret well in any country : they are so reflective and accurate ; but Frenchmen, besides being poor linguists, are so vain in pretending to know more than they really do, that very little reliance can be placed upon them.



THE INTERPRETER.

The man who interpreted for me looked like a shabby school-usher, and was painfully servile towards the magistrate ; he understood English, but spoke it very badly, and often had a difficulty in making his meaning clear. However, he quickly let me know of what I was accused, and his announcement came to me like a blow on the head with a poker.

"You are accused," said he, "of conspiring to murder the Emperor of Russia."

"What nonsense!" I answered, in amazement. "I must have been mistaken for some one else;" but the interpreter shook his head:

"Monsieur le Juge wants to know where your accomplices went after leaving you at the Northern Railway Station yesterday?"

"What accomplices?"

"Why, those Russian Nihilists who travelled with you from London, and for whom you took rooms at the Grand Hotel."

"Good heavens! were those Nihilists?" I exclaimed, with stupefaction. As I spoke the magistrate lifted a newspaper and revealed the parcels which Madame d'Ortrelles had entrusted to me the day before. There were some fragments of steel shells in them, a thing that looked like an iron bottle, two copper plates, and several pieces of wire. The magistrate then spoke at some length, and the interpreter translated.

"Monsieur le Juge says your best hope of obtaining mercy lies in making a full confession. Your guilt is proved by these articles that were found in your luggage—the pieces of shell, a flask containing an explosive substance, and plates for forging Russian passports and bank notes. Moreover, your accomplices have long been under the surveillance of the English, French, and Russian police, and it is of no use trying to shield them."

I listened to all this with feelings difficult to picture. I no longer wondered at my arrest; but I proceeded to give a

truthful account of how I had become acquainted with the so-called Russians, and pointed to my passport, letters, and cheque book (which lay on the table), as proofs that I was a respectable man and not likely to have mixed myself up in any conspiracy. But the Juge, when these things were repeated to him, sneered incredulously. He acted throughout like a bullying advocate rather than an impartial judge.

"Monsieur le Juge says your story is grossly improbable," remarked the interpreter. "He advises you again not to waste time in foolish falsehoods which can only make your position worse."

"What right has he to tax me with falsehood until he has put my veracity to the test?" I asked, with indignation. "Let inquiries be made about me."

"Inquiries will be made," said the interpreter, after he had communicated my answer to the magistrate, who received it with a contemptuous shrug. "Meanwhile he will remand you for a week, and since you will furnish no information you must be kept *au secret*."

"What do you mean by *au secret*?"

"You cannot be allowed to communicate with your friends or receive visits."

"I suppose I may see a solicitor?"

"Not until you are committed for trial. French procedure is not English."

"Good God! but this is monstrous. I can tender bail for twenty thousand pounds: tell the Juge that."

The interpreter did tell him, but with no effect. I got the reply that bail is only accepted after committal, and not even then in such a case as mine. I might write to my Ambassador if I pleased, but to nobody else; my friends would be informed of my arrest, and they could lodge money for me with the governor of the prison to which I was going to be conveyed; but they would not be permitted to see me for the present. I attempted to protest against these high-handed proceedings, and asked if I might write to Lord Lyons there and then; but the magistrate was already tired of the sound of my voice: "Allez! allez!" he said, sharply, and signed to me to begone as if I were a cadger. The gendarme who had stood behind my chair throughout the examination, caught me by the arm and marched me out of the room. I was taken back to my cell and once more locked up, with the intimation that I should be transferred to the prison of Mazas at six o'clock.

Left alone to my reflections, I tried to compose myself, but was too excited to think with much sequence. What revolted me was the absurd injustice of the treatment to which I was subjected. That I should be suspected of conspiracy was admissible under the circumstances of my having been found travelling on terms of apparent friendship with conspirators; but that I should be denied legal assistance to establish my innocence as soon as possible struck me then, and strikes me now, as a barbarous hardship. Such is French law, however, and I had only myself to thank for getting into its power by having been too civil towards my men-

dacious travelling companions, and three times I asked a warder through the trap in the door for paper to write; but the only reply I got was, "Patience."

I was wishing the deceitful Muscovites at a warmer place than St. Petersburg, when the door of my cell was unlocked, and I was sent downstairs *en route* for Mazas. I now had to submit to a series of more trying ordeals than any I had yet gone through. First, a gendarme led me across a courtyard open to the public; and during the transit he held the wrist of my right hand by means of a piece of twisted whipcord, to each of the two ends of which was fastened a little bit of wood, which served as handles in his grasp. It appears that iron *hand-cuffs* are not often used in France; when a prisoner gives trouble he is put into *thumb-cuffs*, which fasten his thumbs together and render him much more helpless than if he were bound at the wrists. Leaving the yard, I was conducted into a building, where the eternal ceremony of giving my names, address, &c., was repeated; after which I was shoved into a "Cellule d'Attente," or waiting-cell—a stone box about six feet by four, and only lighted by a trap in the door. Another decently-dressed prisoner was put in to keep me company, and to my immense gratification he was a young Spaniard who could speak English.

I understand now how prisoners herding together for any length of time are sure to contaminate one another, for a common misery binds men together at once. Here was I, who had not yet been in prison a day, and this monkey-faced Spaniard was already a welcome associate, although he might

have been dyed black with his many crimes, for all I knew. He assured me, however, that he was innocent.

"Eighty-four days, Mister, and not yet tried!" he said, bobbing his head to accentuate his words. "I am accused of stealing three hundred francs from a woman. I have been up twenty-two times before the Juge d'Instruction, and he says: 'If you will not confess, you must go back to prison;' but if I confess, I go to prison too; what can one do, Mister?"

"What sort of a place is Mazas?" I asked.

"If you have plenty of money, you can live well there," he said; "if you have not, you had better work and earn some. I earn about one franc a day making brass chains; it is hard work for me, as I was a clerk in a merchant's office, and not used to such labour. But I have no money."

"Untried prisoners may work, then, if they please?"

"Oh, yes; and if a man have a trade, tailor or bootmaker, he may go on working for his master while in prison; but they take twenty-five per cent. from him for his keep. Some who were drunken when free gain more in prison than they do out of doors."

I thought this arrangement which allows a man to do his best for his wife and family whilst in gaol a much more humane one than the English system, which keeps a man in compulsory idleness whilst awaiting trial, and so punishes him and all who are dependent on him, even though he may eventually prove to be innocent. The Spaniard gave me a few more details about prison life, and stated that when, as

in his own case, a Juge d'Instruction has conceived a prejudice against a prisoner and believes him to be guilty, though proofs positive of his culpability are wanting, he resorts to the expedient of remanding the man again and again for months, in the hope of eventually wringing avowals from him.

"Those men are devils!" he screamed, in a shrill falsetto. "If you will not confess, they say you are obstinate, and quick away you go to prison."

Our conversation was interrupted by the signal to start. Each prison-van carries ten passengers, so nine fellow-prisoners and myself were marshalled in two rows, were questioned again as to our names, and filed out one by one; and at this stage I begged the Spaniard to say that I wanted to write to my Ambassador, but we were both told to hold our tongues; and presently I was hustled through the door towards the van. Ascending this vehicle, which stood under an archway, I was locked up in a compartment where there was just room to sit. Air and light were admitted through a grating in the door, which was, of course, locked. A gendarme sat in the gangway, and during the whole of the drive kept scolding and threatening prisoners who insisted on shouting to one another through their gratings. From so little attention being paid to his vociferations, I concluded that many of my fellow-passengers were hardened offenders, on whom mere rough words had no more effect than spray on the shell of a crab.

On reaching the prison of Mazas I was again put into a

waiting-cell, this time with a Frenchman, who could only exchange shrugs and smiles with me. Prisoners are thus placed together, not for their own pleasure, but for mutual restraint, lest they should lay violent hands on themselves in the first angry or despairing hours which follow committal or sentence. After a few minutes' waiting I was ushered into the "Greffe," or receiving-office, and was not surprised at being obliged once more to furnish every particular about myself. For the fifth or sixth time I now again asked for permission to write the Embassy; but the clerk told me in lame English that I should see the Governor, and he confined himself to entering my name. This done, I was handed over to a warder, who led me into a bath-room, prepared a hot bath, and told me to get in. Whilst I was in the water, he examined all my clothing with the same minute care it had already been examined at the Préfecture, and he ended by confiscating my braces, pocket-handkerchief, and necktie, articles wherewith I might strangle myself if so inclined. This is not done with all prisoners, but only with those who are accused of great offences, or who require special watching as suspected of insanity.

I stood in the dangerous category of state prisoners, so I was consigned to a cell in the 6th Ward, over the door of which hung a card with the letters "S.P." (*Surveillance Particulière*), which meant that I was to be favoured with a special amount of watching.



III.

THE Prison of Mazas is the House of Detention for prisoners on remand or waiting trial. It is an immense place opposite the Lyons Railway Station, and looks inside like all prisons built in these days. The cleanliness so carefully promoted in English gaols is, however, altogether wanting; the warders are dirty, the cells are dirtier, the prisoners, after a few days' imprisonment get to look as dusty and shabby as beggars.

Being in the 6th Ward, I had two privileges non-existent in the other parts of the prison, and which compensated for the deprivation of pocket-handkerchief and braces: I had a bed instead of a hammock, so that I could lie down whenever I pleased; and gas burning all night. The size of the cell was fifteen by eight feet; the floor was of brick; the walls had a "dado" of brown paint, and their upper halves were whitewashed. The furniture consisted of a small table and

a chair, an earthenware pitcher and basin, three shelves, a tin mug, and a birch-broom to sweep with. No towels were allowed, but as a coarse sackcloth shirt was served out every week for each prisoner to wear or not, as he pleased, I made this do the duty of a towel.

On the day after my arrival I saw the Governor of the prison — a civil-spoken, military-looking man, who had nothing abrupt or offensive in his manner, and thus offered an agreeable contrast to all the other French officials with whom my ill-luck had made me acquainted. He sent for an English prisoner to interpret for me. This man came dressed in a dark grey prison suit, and, as I afterwards learned, was a young gentleman undergoing six months' imprisonment for having assaulted a policeman while returning from Chantilly races. Such an offence might have been squared by a £5 fine in England, but blows are heavily paid for in France, and the fate of this young man (who was well-connected) may serve as a caution to other of our countrymen disposed to be free with their fists. He looked profoundly ashamed of himself; but he held a comfortable berth in the prison, being librarian to the foreign book department. He was one among some two hundred prisoners who, having been sentenced to less than twelve months, are allowed as a favour to undergo their term at Mazas, where they earn a remission of one-fourth of their sentence by undergoing solitary confinement, whereas at St. Pélagie or La Santé they would have to work under the "associated system" in common workshops.

The questions put to me by the Governor were all sensible, and he appeared to believe my story, though he held out no hope that the truth of it would prevail to effect my speedy liberation. On the contrary, he bade the interpreter tell me that I must have patience, for that the circumstances against me were so suspicious that the Juge d'Instruction could not be expected to discharge me until he had raked up all my antecedents—a process which, in the case of a foreigner, naturally requires some time. I might write to the Embassy, however, and he would see that my letter was forwarded. He then said that I could make an application to have my linen (which the police had seized with my luggage) restored to me; and that I might have my money by instalments of twenty francs. If I liked to have my meals brought from out of doors, I had only to write down what I wanted every morning, and the paper would be taken to the interpreter, who would translate it into French for the commissionaire. The interpreter added that he would send me an English book, and that I could have a fresh one out every three days.

With such crumbs of comfort I went back to my cell to make the best I could out of my plight. But the irksomeness of confinement was terrible; nobody who has not tried it can have any idea of the torment of mind which it inflicts. In the case of a busy man, too, such as I was, having come to Paris for a short holiday after a long spell of hard work, the ordeal was particularly severe, for I could not dismiss harassing reflections as to how my interests might suffer

should my absence from London be prolonged. My partner was a young man, who, I feared, might not have experience enough to act alone, and I made sure that on hearing of my mishap, he would hasten to Paris, and spend both time and money, perhaps in pure waste, to get me free.

However, every road leads to Rome, and all my anxious musings brought me to the conclusion that I had reached one of those crises in life when a man must arm himself with courage. I wrote to the Embassy on the day when I had seen the Governor; and the same afternoon I received an English book from the librarian. This work (Scott's "Fair Maid of Perth") was a great boon. Books one reads on board ship, in bed when recovering from illness, or in prison, acquire a double savour; and one's reading under such conditions is very different from the hasty, cursory perusal which we bestow on books in busy freedom. After the above-named novel I read "Kenilworth," "Tales of a Grandfather," Cooper's "Two Admirals," Bulwer's "Rienzi" and "Pelham," Harrison Ainsworth's "Spendthrift," and Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre." I had read them all before, but now discovered in many of them beauties never suspected. "Jane Eyre" especially gave me exquisite pleasure; I thought it the sweetest, most truthfully-drawn work of fiction in our language, and its effect lingered upon me in the form of calm thoughts, resignation, and hope, like a clear twilight after a bright day, for a full week after I had finished it.

The time for getting up in the prison was 6 a.m. A few

minutes after that hour the doors of the cells were opened, and warders with brooms swept out all the dust and rubbish, previously collected by the prisoners with their besoms; at the same time the pitchers were replenished with water. A few minutes later a two-pound loaf of brown bread was thrust through the trap in the door; next a warder came round shouting "Letters!" and made a collection of missives from the cells whose inmates were not *au secret*. After this another warder came to the trap and asked orders for the canteen, whence prisoners were at liberty to procure wine, tobacco, cigars, white bread, butter, cheese, stationery, brawn, ham, and various other delicacies. All these goods were very cheap and of excellent quality. French prisoners may smoke as much as they please, and I think this indulgence a good one, for it stops the illicit traffic in tobacco which is said to go on between prisoners and warders in English gaols, and which leads to so much punishing when detected. The French Government, having a monopoly in the sale of tobacco, is, of course, interested in getting as many customers as it can; and I believe it draws a large sum yearly out of the prisons.

There is another good aspect to this matter, which is, that to cut off a refractory prisoner's tobacco supplies a ready means of punishment. The absurd English notion that prisoners cannot be kept in order without flogging is utterly belied by the French method of dealing with offenders in gaol. Troublesome prisoners are "deprived of everything" for three or four days—that is, they are prohibited from

smoking, working (*i.e.*, from earning money), their books are taken from them, and they are reduced to tedious idleness. For more serious offences they are put into a dark cell (*cachot*) ; if violent, they are strait-waistcoated. The most stubborn, unless mad, yield to this rational system of coercion ; they know that by behaving themselves and working steadily they can lead quiet lives, buy a few small luxuries, and obtain a diminution of their sentences. Therefore they do behave very well, as a rule, and punishments are rare.

As I had expressed the wish to be supplied with meals at my own expense, I used to get *café au lait* with a roll and butter at 7.30, a dish of meat and vegetables at 10.30, and some cheese, ham, or cold meat in the evening. This cost about three francs a day, and was sufficient to form a good diet for a man whose exercise was limited to an hour out of every twenty-four in a small airing-yard. Dismal as these airings are, I got to look forward to them as the brightest moments in the day, for then I could see the sun face to face, instead of getting its rays diluted through the panes of fluted glass in my narrow window. Another recreation—I use the term in its strict sense of mental refreshment—was afforded by the religious services on Sunday. There is no chapel at Mazas, but at nine in the morning on Sunday for mass, and at 4.30 p.m. for vespers, the doors of the cells are opened, and held ajar by a catch, so that from his cell a prisoner can see the altar standing under the rotunda in the centre of the building, and hear all the chants. The music is furnished by a harmonium.

One may well imagine that during my first week of confinement I expected daily to hear from the Embassy ; when this hope failed I looked to my second interview with the Juge d'Instruction with a quasi certainty that it might lead to my release. I calculated that by that time this functionary would have been enabled to ascertain what my character was, and so I stepped into the prison van one morning at nine o'clock with more alacrity than some of my fellow-passengers, who were going to trial. On arriving at the Préfecture I was locked up for three tedious hours and a half in one of the waiting cells, which are almost dark, and towards one o'clock was summoned to the magistrate's study.

He was much more civil than before, and I could see that he had been in communication with my friends. Nevertheless, he told the interpreter to ask me whether I persisted in the "improbable" story I had uttered ? and he endeavoured to shake my statement by a number of suggestions tending to prove that no man could be such a fool as to take charge of parcels for people who were utter strangers to him. After an hour of this badgering he again remanded me for a week. He was sorry, he said ; he should have been happy to alleviate my position by allowing me to correspond with my friends, but unless I consented to be more communicative he could not grant me such a signal favour. As to my letter to the Embassy, he assured me that it had been forwarded, but that was all he could or would say.

I could have shaken the man by the ears for his sottish-

ness; but reviewing his conduct by the light of the information I have since obtained about the duties of Juges d'Instruction, I do not well see how he could have acted otherwise than he did. A French examining magistrate is closeted alone with the prisoner to try and worm the truth out of him; if he discharge the man in haste, the public, who have no certainty that the examination has been conducted fairly, may accuse him of having been bribed to hush up the affair; and should flagrant proofs of the man's guilt afterwards appear, the magistrate's character risks serious damage.

I am told that French thinkers have over and over again condemned the system of secretly examining prisoners, and towards the close of Napoleon III.'s reign a liberal-minded minister had prepared a Bill for rendering the "instruction" of criminal causes public, as in England; but reforms of a non-political character are continually being baulked in France by revolutions, which unsettle everything and everybody for years. Any English magistrate possessed of the information which the Frenchman had obtained about me before my second examination would have allowed me to go at large on bail. My father, brother, and partner had all hurried to Paris; the French agents of my banker offered bail to any amount; and the Embassy had exerted itself on my behalf; but my Juge dared not assume the responsibility of releasing me, or of letting me confer with anybody who might bring me comfort. The proper working of the French system requires that a prisoner's mind shall be racked by anxieties, that he shall, in fact, be put morally to torture—

in order that if he have any secret he shall be made to confess it.

On my third appearance before the Juge, after a weary week of misery, his manner had undergone a new change. He was insolent, brutal, full of menaces—saying that I had grossly deceived him, that my accomplices had made full avowals implicating me as the chief author of the conspiracy against the Czar's life; and that, as I now stood in danger of my head, it behoved me not to sham ignorance any longer, but to make what atonement I could for my foul crime by ample confession. There was not a word of truth in the Juge's statement, for I subsequently learned that the police had not succeeded in arresting the Russians; but the unhappy man was putting forth all the artifices of a trade which obliges him to bully and lie or to wheedle and lie according as it may serve his purpose. He raved because he could make no case against me, and was bound to try the effect of a little terrorizing so as to satisfy his conscience that he had tried every means of getting at the truth. He ended by working himself up into a regular passion, and remanded me again for a fortnight.

I went back to the prison in a state of the utmost alarm and despair. I thought it quite probable that those rascally Russians, having been arrested, would try to throw the blame of their diabolical machinations on me, and I foresaw that my troubles might be only just beginning. I might have to linger for months at Mazas, then be committed for trial, and have to take my chance of an acquittal at the hands of some

stupid French jury. With these thoughts I could not sleep without taking counsel of somebody, so I asked to see the Governor, and that gentleman found me so excited that he deemed it expedient to have me put into a double cell, with another prisoner to keep me company.

This fellow-captive was, I believe, one of those men who are designated as "moutons," or spy-prisoners, and his instructions doubtless were to report everything I might say.



He was a Swiss waiter, who spoke a smattering of all languages, and had got into trouble for robbing travellers in an hotel. He was in for twelve months, but made very light of his punishment, and tried to establish confidential intercourse with me by winking and asking me whether I should like to get a letter posted, for one of the warders was his friend and would manage the business for me. The fellow's looks displeased me, however, and I had sufficient caution in my

excitement to see that any false step could only make my position worse. Seeing that he could get no talk out of me, except in general topics, the Swiss quickly dropped his familiarity, and constituted himself my servant. Thenceforth he did all the menial work of our joint cell. I gave him a franc a day for his trouble, which made him happy, and he proved an amusing companion. One great service he rendered me, and this was to teach me a considerable amount of French ; it is surprising how quickly a man learns when he is stimulated by necessity and can give his whole day to study.

The Governor had told me not to mind the Juge d'Instruction's threats, for that if I were innocent, as he believed (for my friends had called upon him to try and obtain permission to see me), no harm could befall me. Notwithstanding these assurances and the studious use I made of my time, the fortnight passed very heavily, and I was often so restless at night that I could not sleep. The Swiss always snored with all his heart ; but this did not help me to get rest.

My fourth appearance before the magistrate was to take place on a Friday. On the previous evening, having then been just four weeks a prisoner, I was seated at about six o'clock rehearsing French dialogues with the Swiss thief, when a warder unlocked the cell door, bustled in, and said :

"Allons, monsieur, allons—la liberté !"

"Hurrah ! you are free, zare !" echoed the Swiss, clapping his hands.

"Really ?" I asked, all the blood making to my face

and then receding from it in a torrent that made my heart thump.

"Oui, oui; il y a ordonnance de non lieu," answered the warder, and the Swiss translated this as meaning that the magistrate had signed a *nolle prosequi*. Then the pair chorused: "Vite! vite! collect all your things."

This time I did not feel the injunction to be "vite" come amiss. How I huddled my linen into a bag, how I gave the Swiss ten francs, how I shook the hand which he graciously extended to me and then ran out, may be imagined. Under the rotunda the Governor was waiting for me with the instruction that the *nolle prosequi* had only just arrived, and that my father, who was still in Paris, was probably ignorant of it, but that I should find him at the Grand Hotel. Then the Governor shook hands with me too; but the formalities of my exit were not quite completed yet. I had to pass through the "Greffé." For a last time I was asked my name, as if nobody in the prison had ever seen or heard of me before; the remainder of the 200 francs I had had on being taken into custody (about 80 francs) was restored to me; and a pen was handed me to sign the entry of my discharge. In another minute I was out of the frowning black gate, had hailed a cab, and was off.

This is how I got my discharge. No apologies were vouchsafed by magistrate or police; no concern was expressed as to the loss, alarm, and annoyance I had experienced. Such courtesies are not in French legal traditions; but it seems the authorities had hinted in a "friendly way"

to my father that I had better leave Paris quietly. We accordingly departed by the mail train that night, and very glad I was to see the outside of the city.

I have not heard what became of the Russians, nor how it happened that I was arrested as their accomplice, nor whether it was by accident or fell design that pretty Madame d'Ortrelles had given me those dangerous parcels to carry. All I know is, that my adventure has taught me a sharp lesson about familiarity with chance companions. To be once bitten, as I was, is to become shy for a lifetime.



A PLUM-PUDDING FROM WINDSOR CASTLE.

I.

WHILST I was an attaché at the Court of Westphalia a remarkable adventure happened one Christmas to Tom Prance, who in the days of "Albert the Good" was a Queen's messenger in the service of the Foreign Office, and a great favourite at our Legation. Tom Prance often came to Westphalia in the discharge of duty. He carried hams from the King of Westphalia to our own Queen of England, and brought back fat poultry from Windsor, or salmon from Balmoral. He was also the bearer of letters and birthday presents between the two Courts. For doing all this he received a salary of £600 a year and had his travelling expenses paid on a liberal scale. His work was not particularly dignified, and could not be said, in any special degree, to suit the aptitudes of a man who had spent some of the best years of his life in a crack cavalry regiment; but Tom was put to no meaner uses than other Queen's messengers. These gentlemen must be employed somehow, and when there are no important despatches going it is as well that they should carry hams as anything else.

Tom Prance was such an obliging fellow that the Legation

had recourse to his services as largely as the Court. Lord Malmsey, our chief, imported all his attire, his dogs, saddles, stationery, and bitter beer from England, and he would commission Mr. Tom to take charge of these things; Lady Malmsey used to beg him to bring over her dresses, boots, bonnets, and her children at holiday time; and we attachés confided to him the responsible task of chaperoning to Germany the parcels we had ordered of our tailors and hatters. I have seen Tom Prance arrive from Great Britain as encumbered with food and raiment, despatches, books, band-boxes, and live-stock as if he were going to provision a large All-Sorts store. A couple of pointers, six hens and a cock, three silk dresses, five suits of clothes, two dozen miscellaneous volumes, a fishing-rod, a little boy and a small girl, with a nurse, from school, three hat-boxes, and a side of bacon—these are the articles I saw him one day tick off, one by one, from a long list in the note-book that always peeped out of his breast pocket; and when he had scratched out his last item, it was a pleasure to see him laugh brightly, and to hear him say: “There, I think the business of this journey is done, and I can go off to breakfast. If you fellows want anything more next time be quick with your orders, for I start again to-morrow.”

Tom was always come and gone like a cricket ball. A Foreign Office clerk had snubbed him once for dawdling on his way, whereby a gift of fish, sent to the King of Westphalia, had reached the royal table in not quite so fresh a condition as that monarch would have liked. Tom’s dawd-


ling had been caused by the fact that an express train had broken down with him, and tumbled him into a gravel pit ; but it would not have been of much use to explain this to the clerk ; and Tom, having taken this dignitary's reproof to heart, scarcely allowed himself, in his subsequent trips, such breathing-time as by the rules of the service he was entitled to. It was reported amongst us that he was going to be married, and was using interest to obtain a comfortable berth at home ; at any rate it was his policy to keep on good terms with the Downing Street clerks, and he used to speak very kindly of them—like a prudent man who wants to make his way.

Now, in the year of which I am writing the King of Westphalia had paid a visit to England ; and the conversation at Windsor Castle one evening turned upon plum-pudding. His Majesty confessed his liking for this dish, and Queen Victoria was graciously pleased to promise that on the following Christmas she would send him the finest plum-pudding that could be concocted in the Windsor kitchen. Though harassed with many weighty affairs of State the King did not forget this promise, and as the end of the year approached he told Lord Malmsey of it, and good-naturedly hinted that he hoped the present would not be forgotten:—

“Es ist mein grösster Genuss Plum-pudding zu essen,” said his Majesty in the Minister's ear at a Court ball ; and he added, with feeling : “Es ist ein vortreffliches essen . . . It is excellent food.”

Lord Malmsey concurred, bowing ; and in his next private despatch to Lord Russell, the Foreign Secretary, he spoke of the plum-pudding, and inquired whether the Queen's promise had been made in jest ? If not he suggested that, with a view to maintaining succulent relations between the two royal families, it ought not to be lost sight of.

It was not likely to be lost sight of. The Queen had given orders that her cooks should prepare a magnificent plum-pudding ; and the chief of the culinary department at Windsor had stirred his wits to make such a fine, large, round thing as had never yet been served at any foreign king's table. The ingredients of this work of art cannot even be set down here ; they would make any greedy boy's mouth water, and cause a dyspeptic man to writhe sadly in his arm-chair. At last, five days before Christmas, the pudding was ready—an enormous brown glistening globe, four feet in circumference, and emitting the pleasantest odour of spice and sweet-rum. Then it was packed with religious care ; first in a muslin shroud, damped with old brandy ; then in several layers of thick white glazed paper ; after which it was inserted in a packing-case half filled with paper shreds. On the top of it, before the lid was nailed down, the cook laid a card, bearing some directions in the German tongue, instructing his colleague, the Herr Oberkoch, or head cook, of the Westphalia Court kitchen, as to how much and what kind of warming the pudding would require to be dished up hot. These directions had been translated by one of the Royal Princesses under the Queen's



own eyes, which shows what a laudable desire there was at Windsor to make the Westphalian King eat a good Christmas dinner. Lastly, when the packing-case had been closed in, it was covered with black oil-cloth, on which was painted in big white letters:—

On Her Britannic Majesty's Service.

TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF WESTPHALIA.

Of course it was Tom Prance who was to have charge of the packing-case. He had to carry it to Germany with the customary official despatches, and a quantity of other things. Lady Malmsey had requested him to bring over a fierce tom-cat in a hen-coop. This animal having distinguished himself by killing mice at Malmsey Hall, was wanted to clear the Legation of rats. Lord Malmsey had ordered some cheeses and oysters, which were to be convoyed with the cat; and in addition to this Tom Prance had to take care of the Honourable Bob Malmsey, aged fourteen, who was enjoying his Eton holidays, and the Honourable Alice Malmsey, aged twelve, who was undergoing education at Fräulein Bordbach's academy for aristocratical young ladies at Kensington. These young people were going to spend Christmas with their parents.

An hour before starting with his mixed cargo, Tom, who had been down to Windsor in the afternoon for the plum-pudding and the Court letters, called at Downing Street for the F.O. despatches. The clerk who handed them to him heard of the pudding, and told him, with a grin, not to let

that delicacy drop into the sea. The mere idea of such a thing made Tom wince. On board the channel steamer, young Bob Malmsey, who remained on deck because the sea was smooth, also became facetious about the pudding, and wondered what the King of Westphalia would say if the officers of the custom house seized this "grub," and cut it up to see what it was made of? But young Bob ought to have known that the official baggage of a Queen's messenger, travelling on service, is not liable to seizure or inspection. Tom Prance landed safely at Belgium with his precious freight, including the tom-cat, who was spitting dreadfully in his hen-coop; he had no trouble at the custom house, and was carried to the end of his journey without accident.

He reached the Westphalian capital late at night. As in duty bound, he drove straight to the Legation and delivered his despatches, the cat and the two young Malmseys; after which he proceeded to the palace and handed in the Court letters (enclosed in a morocco case, of which the King had a key) to the aide-de-camp in attendance. But it was too late at that hour to deliver the packing-case with the pudding. The kitchens were closed, and Tom was told that he must call again in the morning. This had occurred to him before when bringing eatables from England; for Tom's system of travelling by the fastest trains, without ever breaking his journey, generally landed him into Westphalia at unearthly hours, when no business could be transacted. So he started for his hotel in the small omnibus which had brought him from the station, thinking he would ask the servants to

deposit the packing-case in a cool place until it was time to remove it.

Tom Prance was in the habit of alighting at the "König's Hof," an excellent hotel, where he was known, and where he could always depend on finding room; but it so chanced that on this occasion the hotel was quite full. There had been a great gathering of musical and choral societies in the town for some prize contest; and the night-porter, as he explained this, with profuse apologies, to Tom, advised him to go to the "Gross-Herzog," which, he said, was an "altogether-to-be-recommended house." But Tom Prance was not known at the "Gross-Herzog," and the night-porter at this hotel was a puzzle-headed old fellow, who kept on snuffling, "Jah, mein Herr, jah wohl," but seemed neither capable nor desirous of understanding what was said to him. Tom made an attempt to impress upon him what a Queen's messenger was, but the old man only comprehended that Tom considered himself to be a person of importance, and glancing at Tom's mass of luggage it entered into his mind that the stranger's good opinion of himself was justifiable.

"The luggage will be carried up to your room later in the morning, gracious sir," said the night-porter, as Tom and the coachman bore the different packages and trunks into the hall, for the old man was too feeble to assist them much, and all the other servants of the house were in bed.

"This box is for the King," remarked Tom impressively, as he pointed to the pudding-case; "could you put it into the larder, or somewhere else out of harm's way?"

"Jah wohl, gnädiger Herr ; it will be quite safe in the vestibule," answered the porter, not understanding in the least.

"On what story is my room?" asked Tom, not much relishing this arrangement.

"On the fourth story, gracious sir ; I am sorry to say that all the lower rooms are occupied by members of the Bavarian Männergesang-Verein."

"Very well ; keep an eye on this luggage, that's all," said Tom, rather reluctantly. He perceived it would be impossible to get his heavier boxes conveyed up four pairs of staircases without waking up the whole establishment. So, having paid the omnibus driver, he took the brass candlestick which the porter gave him, and mounted to his room, carrying only some of his lighter parcels with him. Even these formed two good loads for the porter and himself.

Lest it should be fancied that Tom was rather fussy about his plum-pudding, you must remember that a Queen's messenger is under heavy responsibilities in respect of the articles confided to his keeping. This royal plum-pudding was not a mere ignoble mass of boiled mincemeat ; it was a royal present from one sovereign to another, and it would be no laughing matter for Tom if he allowed any injury to befall it. Its pecuniary value could be assessed at the capitalised worth of Tom's salary, for it might well happen that the Queen's messenger would be dismissed if he let the precious thing miscarry.

However, Tom Prance, having once more cautioned the old porter, went to bed without much anxiety. He was very tired, and quickly fell into a sound sleep. It was past nine o'clock when he awoke, and he might have slept longer had he not been roused by a servant, who had been sent from the Legation to fetch away all Lord and Lady Malmsey's parcels, and those which belonged to us attachés. Tom speedily dressed himself, gave the servant all the smaller packages, and then went downstairs to deliver to him a couple of heavy boxes and a hamper.

But at his first glance—his very first—as he stepped into the entrance-hall, Tom Prance saw that the box with the plum-pudding was gone!

The hotel was, by this time, bustling with guests who were going away by train. There was an omnibus at the door loaded with luggage. Members of the Männergesang-Verein were streaming downstairs with instruments of music—fiddle-cases, baize-bags containing trumpets, or scores of songs in leather rolls. Waiters were hurrying to and fro with bills, and the day-porter, a tall, florid-faced man, with a gold-laced cap, was standing in the door-way shouting orders like a field-marshal.

Tom made a dart at this official, caught him by the shoulder, and swung him round. "Where is my black box?" he cried, in terrible accents; "a box for the King!"

"In one minute, mein Herr," answered the porter, and was off to the omnibus door to get his fee from a party of



Bavarians who were hurriedly clambering in as if they meant to forget him.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" inquired Lord Malmsey's servant, who was an Englishman.

"No—o; here are your things," replied Tom, recollecting himself; for he knew that if he let the servant suspect what was the matter, the story would be told to the whole

Legation in half-an-hour. His heart thumped, and there was a lump in his throat from excitement; but he had the courage to control himself until the servant had got his chattels removed into a cab and was gone. By this time Tom had walked feverishly round the omnibus, and had satisfied himself that the pudding-box was not on the roof. Where was it?

Our unhappy friend marched back into the hotel. The omnibus had driven off, and the porter had time to attend to him.

"Will you tell me where my box is?" asked Tom, staring into the face of this functionary as if he would eat him.

"Really, mein Herr. When did you come? I was not on duty last night. Did you say a small white box?"

"No, a big black one—square, heavy; with the King's name painted on it? Where is it? Where is that old man who was here in the night, and who kept on stupidly saying 'Jah wohl'?"

"Ah, mein Herr, old Spauser! He must be in bed."

"Rout him out; fetch him down; bring him by the ears."

Tom's face and manner were awful to see. As he spoke he walked round the hall, peered into corners, opened doors. The landlord, his wife, two waiters, and three strangers came out inquiring what was up? The hapless Queen's messenger explained, and this time he found an intelligent circle of listeners, more fitted to understand him than old

Spauser had been. The idea of a box for the King lost in his hotel—famed for its not-to-be-rivalled comforts and moderate prices (see Guide-book advertisements) gave the landlord a shock. Tom did not mention that he had been merely the custodian of a plum-pudding, so the landlord conjectured that the box contained treasure. What if he should be held accessory to a theft of the King's property? The landlord, who was a sleek, obsequious person, turned pale.

"Why, why," he exclaimed, in a strangled voice, "did not the Herr Baron von Klinkelbock and his friend the Herr Baron von Schaumkelle depart this morning by an early train?"

"Yes, they left at seven for Krautfeld," answered the porter. "It was Spauser who saw them off; they had much luggage."

"Where is Krautfeld?" asked Tom Prance impatiently.

"Krautfeld is three hours from here by train, gnädiger Herr," said the landlord. "The Herr Baron von Klinkelbock has his estate of Tonne Schloss there. You can go by the eleven o'clock train."

"But how am I to know if the Baron has really taken my box?"

"Perhaps Spauser can tell us."

"I have sent to call Spauser," said the rosy-faced day-porter.

Old Spauser had been called. He came down presently wrapped in a dirty cloak, and looking half asleep; and to

Tom's first query he answered in his usual bewildered way, "Jah wohl, mein Herr."

"Don't say 'jah wohl' in that stupid manner," cried Tom, exasperated. "Collect your senses and tell me plainly whether you sent off a box of mine with Baron von Klinkelbock?"

"Jah wohl, gnädiger Herr, ganz gewiss," replied old Spauser, as if he had done something to be proud of.

"Then, what the deuce do you mean by such conduct?" asked Tom savagely.

To this inquiry old Spauser had no answer ready; but it transpired that, having been particularly enjoined to keep an eye on somebody's luggage, he had pondered so much on the subject that he had forgotten whose luggage he was to mind. The two barons were going off by an early train, and they were very anxious about *their* luggage; so old Spauser had hoisted the square, black box on to their cab, thinking he was doing right. He now remembered that it was the gnädiger Herr (pointing to Tom) who had told him to look after his box, and he was surprised that he should have been so forgetful. He was sure the gnädiger Herr would excuse him, on the ground that he had meant well.

What could Tom say? He mentally cursed old Spauser by his gods, and the "Gross-Herzog" hotel along with him; but in the upshot he calmed down enough to eat a moody breakfast, and at a quarter to eleven he started for the station in a cab *en route* for Krautfeld. He had scarcely

left the hotel when a court carriage rattled up to the door, and from it descended with dignity a tall, pompous, puffy-faced gentleman dressed all in black, and accompanied by a little boy in white, with a flat linen cap. This was none



other than the Herr Oberkoch Bratenwürdig, *chef de cuisine* to His Majesty, and a "Küchenjunge," or scullien, one of his aides-de-camp. Herr Bratenwürdig had heard of the pudding's arrival, and he had been to the Legation to fetch it as a special mark of respect to his colleague in the Windsor kitchen who had composed it. From the Legation he had been sent to the "Gross-Herzog" hotel; and he now entered the hostelry with a solemnity befitting his errand, having black gloves on, a dazzling shirt front, and looking a great man every inch.

Herr Bratenwürdig was well known to the landlord of the "Gross-Herzog." Was he not the Rothschild of the

fish and vegetable markets of the capital, causing prices to rise or fall according to the purchases he made for the Royal kitchen? When eels were "lively" and soles "flat" one might be sure that the Herr Oberkoch had dishes of *anguilles à la Tartare* in view for the royal household; and a rise in turnips always informed the frequenters of the market that somebody at the palace was going to have *mouton aux navets* for dinner. So the landlord bustled forward reverently to greet Herr Bratenwürdig, and ushered him into his parlour, where the great cook asked to see the "Herr Cabinet's Courrier Prance."

"He has just gone this minute," answered the landlord; "he has left for Krautfeld."

"Ach so! but had he not a box for me—that his, for His Majesty? The Queen of England has graciously offered to His Majesty the King a plum-pudding."

"Ein plum-pudding!" echoed the landlord, and the full gravity of the accident that had occurred at once burst on him. He had been a cook himself, and could understand a cook's feelings. A vulgar mind might have rejoiced that the missing box contained no treasure of gold or silver; but the landlord well knew that kings will never be at a loss for precious metals so long as they have the breeches-pockets of their subjects to draw from; whereas a masterpiece of culinary science, once lost, is like a burnt picture, and cannot be replaced.

"Ach lieber Himmel!" he ejaculated in despair; and he explained what had happened. No man ever broke more

tenderly to a bosom friend the news of a great domestic calamity; but he had to break it, and could only temper his announcement with the formula usual among doctors: "Perhaps there is still hope?"

"I fear there is none," answered the Herr Oberkoch, shaking his head as if the pudding were doomed. He was deeply moved; but after a brief struggle with his feelings, he rose superior to his misfortune, as a great man always will. He was already reflecting that if the Queen of England's pudding failed he must make one himself. He stood in the position of an officer who is suddenly called upon to take the command of a battle owing to the death of his chief, the general of an allied army. Perhaps his professional vanity was not unflattered by the call which was thus made on his genius: "To-morrow is Christmas Eve. I must make a plum-pudding myself; there is still time," he remarked, with admirable fortitude.

"Oh, Herr Oberkoch, may I help you? My house, my kitchens are at your service."

"No, I thank you," answered the Oberkoch grandly; "all I will ask of you is to preserve silence. I will go home and meditate before composing. Not until my Royal Master and Mistress have tasted of my pudding, and graciously pronounced it nice, will I consider whether I ought to tell them the truth."

It was the landlord's obvious interest to preserve silence about what happened under his roof through the blunder of old Spauser; but he again ventured to express the hope that

the pudding would not be lost. "Herr Prance has gone to fetch it, and the Herr Baron von Klinkelbock is an honourable man."

"Klinkelbock! I know that Herr Baron," replied Herr Bratenwürdig, bitterly; "and it is because I know him that I have so little hope. The Baron von Klinkelbock comes to Court; he is a notorious glutton, but no man; he cannot appreciate good cookery."

"He certainly eats a good deal when he stays here," confessed the landlord; he helps himself twice to every dish at the table d'hôte, but he never complains."

"Ach, mein; it is quantity the Herr Baron cares for, not quality," responded Herr Bratenwürdig, not reflecting that he was paying a poor compliment to his friend's *cuisine*. "Would you believe it, I had once prepared a little dish of plovers' eggs with a *purée* of truffles for Her Majesty our Queen. By some mistake the dish was handed to the Herr Baron, who scooped two-thirds of the contents on to his plate, and when Her Majesty deigned to ask him whether the dish was to his liking, he replied,—What do you think he replied? Why, that he thought it too rich to be eaten at dinner; just as if I were not a better judge than he of how a *menu* should be composed!"

"It was certainly presumptuous on his part, Herr Bratenwürdig," answered the landlord, humbly.

"Am I not justified then in saying that the Queen of England's plum-pudding has fallen into bad hands?" said Herr Bratenwürdig, with a hopeless look; and soon after-

wards he left the hotel, pensive as the Great Frederick on the eve of Rosbach, and followed by the little "Küchenjunge," who had been kicking his heels about in the hall.

II.

MEANWHILE poor Tom Prance was speeding towards Krautfeld in one of those cautious German expresses which go thirty miles an hour. He had at first thought of merely telegraphing to Tonne Schloss and asking Baron von Klinkelbock to send back the packing-case if he had it; but he had reflected that there might be a delay in the telegram, or that the Baron might not be able to send back the case the same day; so, on the whole, he had determined to travel. After a three hours' journey he reached Krautfeld. Nature was putting on her white Christmas garb in the form of snow, and it was snowing heavily. Tom experienced some difficulty in finding a trap; but at last he contrived to hire a cranky gig, driven by an old peasant in a three-cornered hat, and after a wearisome drive of an hour at a snail's pace he reached Tonne Schloss. He was covered with snow, his teeth were chattering, and he felt in by no means a good humour towards the Baron who had put him to all this trouble.

The Tonne Schloss was an old-fashioned country house, standing in the midst of a fir-wood, and here Baron von Klinkelbock was said to lead a joyous bachelor life with his friends. The old peasant who drove Tom knew the Baron

well, and described him as a jovial soul, a keen sportsman, a mighty beer-swiller, a player on the French horn, a generous gallant among village wenches.

"If the gnädiger Herr is going to dine with the Herr Baron he will dine well," remarked the old man, with a dry chuckle, as of a wooden nut-cracker; "but it is past the Herr Baron's usual dinner hour; he dines at half-past twelve."

It was then half-past two; but when, in answer to Tom's ring, a stout servant with moustaches and an ill-cut blue livery had opened the door, Tom at once heard sounds of hearty laughter and chinking of glasses from a dining-room which adjoined the hall. The hall itself was encumbered with plates, dishes, and empty bottles, and a couple of florid servant girls, bare armed and fat, were clearing these things away.

"Take my card to the Herr Baron, and tell him I would speak to him instantly," said Tom, who could not help sniffing at the nice odour of the Baron's viands, for he was hungry as well as cold and angry; and so saying, he made a sign to the old peasant to wait for him with the trap, for he expected to return with the box in time to catch the four o'clock express back to the capital.

The man-servant had disappeared with Tom's card, and there was a sudden hush in the dining-room. Tom stood about a couple of minutes in the hall; then there was another gigantic outburst of laughter, and the door opened noisily, and out stepped an enormous man—six feet high,

broad-shouldered, ponderous, with a napkin tied round his



THE BARON.

neck, and a Rabelaisian air of good-humour on his jolly red face. This was the Baron von Klinkelbock.

"Aha, Herr Prance," he cried, "how are you? Welcome to Tonne Schloss. We have never met before, I think, but we know the same people. Your friends of the English Legation have often spoken to me about you. You have come to fetch the King's plum-pudding, I suppose. Aha! here it is; look!"

Tom Prance did look. He had mechanically shaken the Baron's hand and suffered himself to be led to the threshold of the dining-room; but there he stood transfixed. In a large dish at the head of the table, his horrified gaze beheld all that remained of the plum-pudding—a shapeless fragment, like the crumbling wall of a demolished house. The Baron's fat forefinger pointed to it, shaking with merriment. The Baron's guests—half-a-dozen yellow-bearded, gaitered, half-tipsy squires—all guffawed; and the Baron himself, rocking about with laughter, added insult to injury by violently clapping Tom on the shoulder and crying: "Aha, Herr Prance; it was the best plum-pudding I ever tasted in my life."

This was too much for Tom. "Herr Baron, this may be a joke to you, but it is none to me," he said, growing very red; and it is to be feared that if he had had a sword he would have drawn it, and called upon the gluttonous German to "come on;" but Baron von Klinkenbock was one of those lusty fellows who will never be baulked of a joke by hard words. He simply caught Tom by the arm and pushed him hospitably towards the table.

"Aha! we are not going to quarrel about a plum-pud-

ding, Herr Prance. You must sit down and have some dinner with us, and I'll tell you how it all happened. You know it was old Spauser's fault at the hotel; he had the box put among my luggage. My servant, who cannot read English, had it registered among the other things, and it was brought here. I did not even notice it. My servant had it carried to my room, removed the black cover and the lid, and opened it. When, behold, a plum-pudding! Of course he took it to the kitchen along with a card of directions in German, which he found inside, and my cook clapped it into a cauldron—the biggest we have—lieber Himmel! what a pudding it was! They supposed I must have bought it at a pastrycook's; and it was only by an accident that I heard, just before sitting down to dinner with my friends, of this good thing which the gods had provided for us. I then examined the packing-case and the cover, and discovered that my friends and I were going to eat a dainty provided by your Queen for our King; but it was too late then to undo what had been done. What do you say to that, Herr Prance? You see I was not to blame; but when you have well dined and drunk, I will go back with you to the capital, and explain all to the King. He knows me, and will laugh."

"I am not so sure of that," answered Tom Prance, but he was obliged to smile, for the explanation was quite plausible, and the apology sincere. Besides, it was of no use crying over an eaten pudding.

"Here, sit down," laughed the joyous Baron, forcing Tom

into a chair, "and let me introduce my friends to you. Here is Baron von Schaumkelle, Graaf von Lustberg, Baron von Laffenwoll. . . ." He named his half-dozen guests,



who all rose in turn, and bowed ; and then he cried to his servants—"Hie, Fritz, Gretchen, Malchen, bring soup, plates, game, and another bottle of Rüdesheimer for Herr Prance."

"You are very good," said poor Tom, trying to put a good face on the matter; "but I wish all the same, Herr Baron, that I had another plum-pudding to offer to your King."

"Is that so?" answered the Baron. "If you like, we'll make him one." He spoke in jest; but Count von Lustberg, a merry young man, suddenly put down his glass, and exclaimed, "Why not? Why should we not make our King a plum-pudding, and pack it up as if it had come from the Queen of England?"

"Donnerwetter! that would be a fine joke!" exclaimed Baron von Klinkelbock, his eyes twinkling with amusement; but who knows how to make a plum-pudding; do you, Herr Prance?"

"I know what plum-puddings are made of," answered Tom, laughing too, for he felt better now that he had taken a glass of wine. "You must take flour, eggs, milk, currants raisins, candied peel, cinnamon, nutmeg, beef-suet."

"Hold, hold!" shouted Baron von Klinkelbock. "Aha! nothing easier. Hie, Gretchen, Malchen, Fritz, come here. By Heavens, we'll make that pudding!"

"But it must be boiled nine hours," remarked Tom, who was beginning to see a happy solution of his difficulty in Count von Lustberg's scheme.

"It shall be boiled nine hours," replied the good-natured Baron. "We will all sit up to see it done. You shall spend the night here, and return to-morrow in triumph."

* * * * *

The next day, at ten o'clock, "the Queen of England's

plum-pudding" was delivered to the Herr Oberkocht of the King of Westphalia's kitchen. The Baron and his guests, including Tom Prance, also five servants, had spent three hours chopping up its ingredients, and stirring them into a paste before their never-to-be-forgotten pudding was committed to the large tablecloth in which it was tied for boiling. It was a merry party which these gentlemen made in the kitchen of Tonne Schloss, and the two maids, Gretchen and Malchen, laughed till their sides ached to see how they worked, and what things they put into the pudding. For in addition to the ingredients which Tom had suggested, each of the Germans contributed some idea of his own; for Tom had said that he knew a plum-pudding "contained all sorts of other things." So the dainty dish prepared for his Westphalian Majesty was made to include four cold pork-chops, a German sausage, six pounds of gingerbread, twelve lemons, a box of sweet biscuits, a quart of treacle, three pounds of chocolate, and lastly, when all these articles had been minced and brayed together, the pudding was boiled for the nine regulation-hours, in a mixture consisting of four gallons of rum, two of brandy, two of kirsch, twenty-four bottles of claret, and twelve of burgundy, the whole sweetened with twenty pounds of sugar. No one had ever seen such a pudding, its alcoholic strength was enough to knock one down.

But it delighted the King and Queen of Westphalia, and the whole Royal Family. Evil tongues indeed whispered that it proved "a tipsy cake" and sent them all to their

royal couches in such a happy state of festiveness, that they continued to sing and laugh after they had got between their royal sheets. However that may be, his Westphalian Majesty emphatically declared next day that there are no cooks like English cooks; but he was heard to add thoughtfully: "It is lucky Christmas comes but once a year."

As for the Herr Oberkoch Bratenwürdig, he, too, rendered his professional homage to the cookery of old England. "Lieber Himmel!" he exclaimed, "what a prodigious composition that was. Why, the mere contemplation of it for half-an-hour made me unsteady in the head and legs!"



RETIRED FROM BUSINESS.

ISAIAH RUBBLEWORTH, bookseller and publisher, of Paternoster Row, had from the time when he commenced business on his own account worked with a single object in view—viz., that of retiring from business, and leading the life of a country squire. He was thirty when this project dawned on his imagination; but he was sixty before he found himself in a position to realise it. The intervening thirty years were spent in making money—slowly at first, and in little lumps; then more quickly, and in big piles. Isaiah had always been industrious; but when he turned his fiftieth year, and began to see his goal within reach, he developed a feverish activity, and launched with apparent recklessness into enterprises of the most hazardous character. His wits were keen, however, just as the feet of a practised gymnast are sure: and though his undertakings amazed his rivals in the trade, and scared Joe Meekin, his chief clerk, they all succeeded somehow.

Isaiah Rubbleworth was quite rich enough to have retired at fifty, had he pleased; and indeed it was from that age that he fell to talking of his retirement as an impending

event that would take place "next year." He always said "next year at the latest;" but year after year, and through some excuse or other, the great step was delayed. Either Rubbleworth was bringing out some new edition of an old author, and desired to see it well through the press, or he was helping to start a scientific review, or he had bought a large library which he wished to class and dispose of in person. Then, again, there was difficulty about getting a successor, for Isaiah Rubbleworth meant to withdraw completely from the trade, and would not suffer either of his sons to remain mixed up with it.

He had two sons and two daughters. He had married at thirty, and all his children were born before he was thirty-five, so that when he had completed his half-century of life, and first spoke in earnest about retiring, his eldest son, Julius, was nineteen, and his youngest daughter, Phœbe, fifteen. Soon afterwards Julius was sent to Sandhurst, and issued thence into a cavalry regiment; next Ethelwolf, the younger son, matriculated at Oxford, and prepared for a clerical career. The two daughters remained, and Mrs. Rubbleworth was irritant in her entreaties to her husband that he would see about getting these dear children happily settled. But Isaiah obstinately repeated that he would not let his girls "be married out of the shop," and besought their mother to have patience, saying that he would find them grand husbands when he had bought his estate in the country.

So it came to pass that Isaiah Rubbleworth reached the

age of fifty-nine, by which time his eldest daughter was twenty-six and the younger twenty-four. Then it was that Joe Meekin, the chief elerk, came in for an unexpected legacy, and revealed himself in a new light, both as capitalist and suitor, for he offered to buy Isaiah Rubbleworth's business, and at the same time proposed for the hand of his master's elder daughter, Jemima, with whom he had for some time past been carrying on a clandestine correspondence,



which Miss Jemima kept no secret from her sister and her more intimate feminine friends.

Old Rubbleworth agreed, not without a pang, to sell his business; but he turned a deaf ear to all supplications for the hand of Jemima. "It was unbecoming his dignity,"

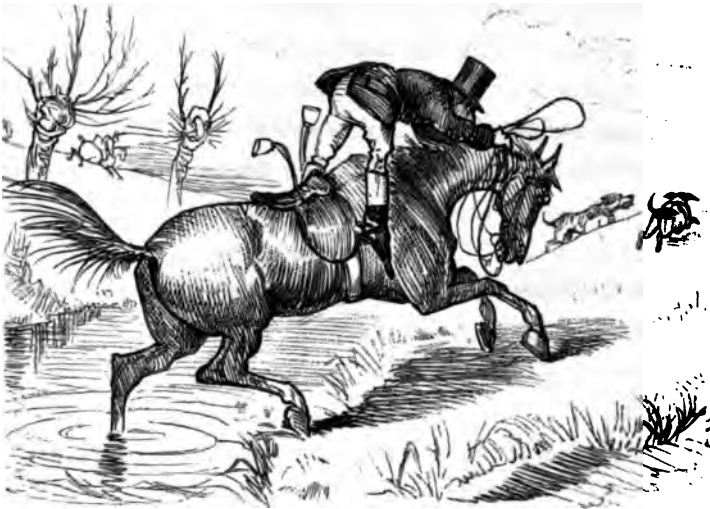
said he, "to give the daughter of a squire, the sister of an officer and of a clergyman, to a person engaged in commercial pursuits;" and with a frown he begged Joe Meekin to remember what a difference lay between them.

Meekin, who was rather a poor creature, gulped down his love with a sigh, as if it had been a cherry-stone; and Jemima, likewise sighing, resigned herself to the prospect of marrying a lord. She was a tall, sentimental young person, with a long nose, who would have been well content to marry Joe Meekin had that aspiring man made a push to win her hand; but she could not with propriety make advances to a lover who sat down moping before an obstacle instead of boldly surmounting it.

So Meekin contented himself with buying Rubblesworth's business, and he gave a good price for it. He was rather like a man who cannot ride taking over a powerful high-stepping horse from an experienced jockey. However, that was his own affair, and Rubbleworth affectionately wished him good speed as they parted. The retiring bookseller then shook the dust of London off his boots, and betook himself to the country. He had entered upon negotiations for the purchase of an estate and manor house in Norfolk, and, pending the conclusion of the bargain, had been allowed to hire the house for a twelvemonth on trial.

At first he enjoyed his new life vastly. He spent his mornings visiting his stables, conservatory, and gardens; and in the afternoon he consulted with architects who were to enlarge his house, and with farmers who were going to

become his tenants. Instead of the companionship of authors and journalists, he had that of his pigs and calves, and felt no worse for the change: whilst as to books, the great one of Nature lay before him with its green leaves, much more refreshing to study than sheets of damp paper covered with printers' ink. In due time the hunting season came round, and Isaiah went forth to his first meet in a scarlet coat, and with a grand-looking "fencer" between his legs. He was



pitched headlong into a mill-stream before he had ridden half a mile. Recognising the fact that a man cannot hunt comfortably unless his horse will allow him to keep his seat, the ex-bookseller thought he would confine himself to shooting, and invested in a breech-loader. The first use he made

of it was to discharge its two barrels accidentally into the back of his gamekeeper. After that he was minded to try fishing ; and, sitting down a whole afternoon on a wet bank in the rain to angle for trout, he caught nothing but rheumatism. "Well, well," muttered the worthy gentleman between two twinges that made him grimace, "I suppose it takes time to accustom oneself to country sports ; but I can find occupation without pursuing beasts and fishes."

He got himself elected member of a School Board, and hobbled about inspecting the educational establishments in his district. Coming one day to a school where a parcel of new books was being unpacked, he asked to see the invoice, and exclaimed, at the price that had been charged, "Why, it's swindle ! I could have bought better-bound books for the Board half as cheap."

"Half as cheap ?" echoed one of the teachers.

"Well, thirty per cent. cheaper," answered Rubbleworth, who cautiously reflected that, if he had undertaken to buy books, he should have levied his commission on the bargain.

There was a conference some days after this between the members of different School Boards, and it was resolved to ask the experienced Mr. Rubbleworth whether he could recommend books most suitable as well as cheapest for little boys and girls. He not only recommended the books required, but consented to purchase them ; at the same time, in order to get better terms, said he, by buying on a large scale, he suggested that as many schools as possible should constitute

him their agent. At this word the managers of almost all the schools in the county sent him their orders, and the retired bookseller soon supplied them with books at about twenty per cent. cheaper than they could have bought them for themselves, while pocketing for himself about twenty per cent. by the transaction.

Everybody was so pleased with these results that the managers of public libraries and working men's institutes, the guardians of workhouses, and the chaplains of gaols applied to Mr. Rubbleworth to render them the same service as he had rendered to the schools. He consented, and became rather busier than he had been in his business days at Paternoster Row. His table was flooded with letters, and the hall of the lordly mansion which he had hired became encumbered with packing-cases labelled, "Books—To be Kept Dry." Jemima and Phœbe, who had never been allowed to haunt their father's shop in London, were now pressed into service to unpack the boxes, verify their contents, register them, make them up in brown paper parcels, and forward them to their destinations. They slaved like porters, and were up to their elbows in dust and shavings all day long. Their mother, who was charged to keep a number of ledgers, make up accounts, and conduct an extensive correspondence with public bodies, protested that all this did not look much like retiring from business; but her husband answered impatiently :

"Pooh, pooh! we are merely enjoying ourselves. This is a labour of love. Just write to Julius, will you, and ask

whether the Colonel of his regiment wants books for the soldiers' recreation room ? ”

Next day Lieutenant Julius Rubbleworth, receiving his mother's communication, imagined that his father contemplated making a present of books to the soldiers. Not unwilling to earn a character for generosity in the army, he wrote to say that amusing books were always welcome in barracks and on board troop-ships, and that the War Office expended a fixed sum yearly on the purchase of such works. Accordingly the War Office got an application from Isaiah Rubbleworth, who volunteered to save the department fifteen per cent. if it would give him a contract for supplying the defenders of the nation with light literature. Petty economies being dear to the official mind, Isaiah got his contract; and his son Julius had the satisfaction of hearing at mess that his father was “potting a lot of money” by serving the recreation rooms with all the trash that could be collected out of old stalls. Hereat Lieutenant Julius cursed.

But now a new sphere was suddenly opened to the activity of old Rubbleworth, who had “retired from business.” A young lord drove up to his residence one morning in a spanking dog-cart, making the hearts of Mrs. Rubbleworth and of her daughters flutter. These dear damsels rushed off squeaking from their packing-cases to put on their best dresses, and presently came down all spruce, expecting to be introduced to my lord and get an invitation to some garden-party. But his lordship had already gone. He had

simply come to beg that Mr. Rubbleworth would attend an important book-sale for him, and buy all the rare editions that he might think worth securing; for this lord was an amateur of literary curiosities.

"And do you mean to say that you accepted such an impertinent order?" exclaimed Mrs. Rubbleworth.

"Impertinent! What are you thinking of? Why the man has given me *carte-blanche*, and I shall perhaps pocket two hundred pounds," cried old Isaiah. "Hie, fetch me the time-table! I must be off to town by the next train." And so saying, he rushed about with a quill behind his ear, neither more nor less than if he were a clerk in a counting-house instead of being a plutocrat worth half a million of money.

From this time old Rubbleworth was scarcely ever at home. One nobleman after another begged him to attend book-sales; and as he took a keen professional delight in these expeditions (for there was no sweeter thing to him than to carry off an *editio princeps* in the teeth of a dozen competitors), he was continually to be seen at auction-rooms making grand purchases, out of which he pocketed from twenty to fifty per cent.

One day, whilst he was in London attending a sale, he happened to find himself near a throng of booksellers' clerks who were discussing the position of different firms, and who alluded derisively to the house of Rubbleworth and Co., which under the direction of Joe Meekin was, as they said, going to the dogs.

This was more than Isaiah could stand. As soon as the sale was over he jumped into a hansom and clattered down to Paternoster Row. There he confronted Joe Meekin. "What's this, Joe? I hear your business is shaky."

"Yes, sir; I can't carry on things with the same high hand as you did," whimpered Joe, with a snivel. "You see, sir, you had a good deal of cheek, and I have none."

"Tut, man. Let's see your books," said Isaiah Rubbleworth, strutting towards the office at the back of the shop. He looked like a field-marshal going to take the command out of the hands of an incompetent general.

Presently he was deep in the books of "Rubbleworth and Co.," for he had sold his name to Joe Meekin for commercial purposes along with the business. Meanwhile Joe Meekin slunk out through a back door and went away to carry off Jemima. The poor fellow was lovesick, and had reflected that he should never win Jemima unless he eloped with her. The next day, when old Isaiah travelled down to Norfolk, after setting Joe's books right, he arrived just in time to hear that his eldest daughter and his late chief clerk had levanted in the direction of the Scottish Border.

"And it's all your fault, Isaiah," cried Mrs. Rubbleworth shrilly. "How could you expect the dear girl to wait until she was grey on the chance of a lord turning up?"

"B—bless the dear girl," muttered Isaiah, bewildered. "Who is going to attend to Joe's business now he's off honeymooning?"

"Why, *you* must," declared Mrs. Rubbleworth stoutly. "You're not so unnatural as to want to ruin your own son-in-law, are you?"

Isaiah found this argument unanswerable, and returned to London. He put himself in harness again, and worked like four horses. The firm of "Rubbleworth and Co." (*alias* Meekin) looked up again, and began to be talked of in places where booksellers meet, inasmuch that Joe, who heard how his affairs were being managed for him, was in no hurry to curtail his honeymoon tour. As for Mrs. Rubbleworth, no sooner was the husband's back turned than she cleared her hall of packing-cases, threw away her ledgers, and embarked on a jolly course of champagne breakfasts, afternoon teas, and picnics—all with a view to finding a lordly husband for Phœbe.

One afternoon at a picnic, being a little elated with sparkling wine, she let fall these precious words into the ears of a viscount's eldest son—

"My daughter Phœbe will bring a portion of a hundred thousand pounds to her husband."

The viscount's son took the hint, and proposed the next day. Phœbe and her mother accepted, and the wedding was fixed six weeks thence, so that there might be no unnecessary delay. But when old Isaiah was apprised of the fact by letter, he wrote back despairingly:

"If Phœbe is to have a hundred thousand pounds, I must begin working again. Suppose I buy old Drybon's business?"

Drybon was a rival bookseller and publisher, who wanted to retire from business in earnest. Old Rubbleworth purchased his stock-in-trade, goodwill, two newspapers, and a magazine which he was managing, and added all these items to Joe Meekin's establishment, after drawing up a private deed of partnership with his son-in-law. In writing that he must resume work again Isaiah had made a statement that would have impelled any one who knew him to smile, for he seemed already to be working more than any one man, having a regard to his health, ought to work; but all this was as nothing compared with the spurt he put on when he found himself under the necessity of making money "in heaps." He settled to his task so heartily that in the course of a year he brought the joint houses of Drybon and Meekin to the very front in the booksellers' and publishers' trade. During the second year he started a daily paper and a comic paper, which both succeeded, and brought political influence enough to get his second son-in-law, the viscount's son, returned to Parliament, and his elder son-in-law, Joe Meekin, elected an Alderman of London.

Hereupon Joe and the future viscount laid their heads together and decided that trade was a low thing, and that their father-in-law ought really to have some regard for their sensitiveness as gentlemen. They did not ask old Isaiah to give up work, they merely begged him to remember that he had "retired from business," and ought not to let his interference with commercial pursuits appear too ostensibly. "For instance," said they, "whenever you have a good thing

to propose, why not put up one of the clerks to do it instead of doing it yourself?"

Isaiah Rubbleworth bowed his head meekly, and agreed thenceforth to work only in the office behind the shop—and there he is working now. If any of you care to enter the



shop of "Rubbleworth and Co." in Paternoster Row, you may perceive an old man of seventy driving his quill all day over big ledgers, and occasionally issuing orders to young clerks dressed in the height of fashion. This is old Rubbleworth, who has by this time given a hundred thousand to each of his daughters.

Joe Meekin sometimes alludes to him slightly as "my father-in-law who has retired from business, but who sometimes assists me."

But the other son-in-law, the M.P. and future Viscount, says of him: "My poor father-in-law is in his dotage. He has retired from business, but goes on working just for the fun of the thing!"



THE TREASON OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.


I.

LIEUTENANT PAUL WALITZIN, of the 3rd Regiment of Light Horse, or Lithuanian Lancers, belonged, like many other officers, to a Nihilist Lodge. He had taken to conspiracy partly to relieve the tedium of garrison life, for he was quartered at Ekaterinoslav, which is a slow place; and partly because he was too good-natured a fellow to say "No" to some of his older comrades who inveigled him into plotting. There was the grizzled Captain of his troop, Peter Snarischeff, who had told him from the outset that a man must be a Nihilist or a beast—for who but a beast would submit his neck to the yoke of an aristocratic caste, and be the liege servant of a despot? This Snarischeff fed his mind upon German Socialist tracts, which he purchased from a grocer of the Brotherhood, who received them from Leipzig in tins which were supposed to contain Australian beef. Every time he perused a new tract, Snarischeff became more and more nebulous in his plans for reforming society; more and

more sanguinary in his designs for compassing these reforms. The truth is, he was soured from having served thirty years in the army without having got higher than a captaincy ; whereas, had he been of noble blood, and connected with any high member of the Tschinn, he would have been a general long ago.

Paul Walitzin was too young and too hopeful to feel that he had a grievance against the existing order of things otherwise than at second-hand—that is, because his friends had one. He was handsome ; his uniform fitted him well ; he was liked by a number of pretty maids and matrons ; and, thanks to his father, a leather merchant in easy circumstances, he always had a few roubles to rustle in his pocket. At twenty-three a man does not require more than this to feel that life is pleasant, and Paul took but a half-hearted interest in the idea that he might some day be the citizen of a free Muscovite Republic in which every man should be as good as another, and in which no man should believe in anything at all except himself.

Nevertheless, as conspiring is no child's play in Russia, Paul, in the course of his attendance at the meetings of his Lodge, had to take a number of oaths for the extermination of divers things and individuals. The Brethren seemed to be always swearing something ; and when not doing that they were paying money to their committee-men. Paul disbursed his coin freely ; but, as he was never called upon to do anything but listen to tedious speeches which made him yawn, he supposed that the work of social regeneration



was being carried on well enough without his help. Which suited him perfectly.

He had been mixed up with the Nihilists about a year, when one night, being at a ball given by the Governor of Ekaterinoslav, he was presented to a very great lady, the Princess Valdine, wife of one of the highest Court officials. She had been visiting some of her relatives, and was returning to St. Petersburg the next day. Paul was much struck with her, for she was beautiful; and she appeared to be interested in him, for she said, when they had conversed a few minutes on indifferent subjects:

"Surely I must have seen your face before? Were you ever at St. Petersburg?"

"Yes, for a week, two years ago; when I went to escort Colonel Ivanoff, who was ill."

"Ah!—and do you remember stopping the horses of a runaway sleigh on the Square of St. Isaac? There was a lady in the sleigh, but you walked away before she had time to thank you for, perhaps, saving her life."

"I hope you were that lady," said Paul, reddening; but inclined to make light of the matter.

"Yes, I was," said the Princess, smiling kindly; "and I think I ought to testify my gratitude in some way. What could I do for you?"

"Well, that's a serious offer," answered Paul, half grave and half bantering. "I should like to be a captain, and to exchange into one of the Guards regiments; and there is another thing——"

"Well—what?"

"I should like to dance the next valse with you, if you will do me the honour."

"With pleasure," said the Princess graciously, but with all a *grande dame's* dignity; "as to your other request, I will do my best." And she rose to dance with the young Lancer.

When Paul had led her back to her seat he made her a profound bow. He had convinced himself that it was of no use flirting in this quarter. Princess Valdine might be a powerful patroness to him; but she was not a lady to be played with. However, as the Lieutenant turned on his heel to find another partner, he did not attach much importance to the Princess's promises, and was persuaded that she would forget all about him before she returned to St. Petersburg.

In this he was wrong; for, six weeks later, he received a commission, appointing him to a Captaincy in the Grand Duke Alexis's Regiment of Cuirassier Guards; and at the same time the Cross of the Fourth Class in the Order of St. George, "as a reward for an act of courage in saving life."

II.

PAUL WALITZIN went to St. Petersburg. His father, overjoyed at his promotion, doubled his allowance, so that the young captain was enabled to pay his footing properly, and at once made many friends in his new regiment. He was

treated with considerable deference, for it was rumoured that he was a Court favourite, and would quickly rise to higher honours. Everybody knew that the Princess Valdine had taken him in hand. As to his Nihilist opinions, Paul took care not to air them, for the tone of thought in the Cuirassier Guards was violently loyal, all the officers being the sons of noblemen who held high offices under the State or at Court. It was their custom after mess to drink perdition to the whole Revolutionary crew, and when they had drunk a little they freely expressed their belief that a general slaughter of university professors would be the simplest way to bring about a pacification of the country. Very much like the barking of chained mastiffs was the talk of the Czar's young Guardsmen, when they sat with empty bottles around them.

Paul, who was not a nobleman, could not at heart feel altogether with his new comrades, so he used to hold his tongue when they vapoured their nonsense, and thereby he acquired a reputation for being very discreet. This got him noticed in high quarters. One evening when he was attending a reception at Princess Valdine's his patroness said to him, with an approving smile :

"It seems that among all the madcaps of your regiment you are the only sensible man. Your Colonel was saying so to the Grand Duke Alexis. I am well pleased with you, for you are doing honour to my recommendation."

Paul bent his head. "There is no great merit in being silent when one has nothing to say," he answered.

"Oh, but some young men would rather say foolish things than nothing at all. Now listen to what I am going to say. One day this week you will be on guard at the Marble Palace, and will dine at the Grand Duke's table. You will meet the Czar there, as he is coming back from Livadia. If his Majesty speaks to you, and asks you how you like your regiment, be sure to reply that your ambition is to get on the staff."

"But I would rather remain as I am," answered Paul, whose brilliant uniform of white, scarlet, and gold had still all its gloss on.

"When a young man wants to win himself a name he is not content to pass his time among a number of champagne bibbers," retorted the Princess, looking him straight in the eyes reprovingly. "You must do as I bid you, Paul Walitzin. You are to make a way in the world. I shall not be satisfied until you have a post at Court; then I will find you a rich wife."

"I am your servant, Princess," responded the Captain respectfully, though his head reeled somewhat, amusement being for the present of more concern to him than ambition. However, he felt too much beholden towards his patroness to offend her.

Five days afterwards he was informed that he would be on guard at the Marble Palace on the morrow; and his Colonel added that, by command, he was to dine with the Grand Duke. Paul's brother officers congratulated him on this honour, and chaffed him a little about the Princess

Valdine. But Paul was divided between a sense of grateful vanity and the fear that possessed him at the idea that he was going to meet the Czar face to face. He was not a Russian for nothing. The idea of the Imperial Majesty overawed him, and he quite forgot in his agitation that he had ever conspired to overthrow Alexander II. from his throne.

He went off to his lodgings after mess, being minded to spend a quiet evening writing letters home to tell his parents of the good luck that was following him. Before he had thrown off his cloak, however, he perceived a note on his writing-table; and breaking the envelope he read these words: "To-night at ten o'clock. No. 6, Fædor Street," surmounted by three figures "555."

Paul winced. The figures "555" formed the secret cypher of the Nihilist Lodge to which he belonged, and the notice he held was apparently a summons to attend a meeting of a sister lodge in the capital. He struck a match and burned the paper; then meditated for a moment as to whether he should ignore the summons or go to the Lodge and give his resignation. He was beginning to think that all this Nihilism was foolery. What did the people want after all? Paul Walitzin had no fault to find with the Government; he had dined well, he had a cross on his breast, and two golden epaulets on his shoulders; why could not the millions be as satisfied with their condition as he was?

After some deliberation he put on his cap again, thrust a revolver into his pocket, and walked out, resolving that he

would obey the summons and cut off his connection with Nihilism straightway. He was a brave man, and did not recoil at the idea that he might have to face the expostulations of a whole assembly of angry revolutionists. He reasoned about the matter rather guilelessly, as if he could leave the association in which he had been enrolled as easily as an ordinary club.

Fædor Street was not far from the quarter in which Paul lived. It was a handsome, new street, and No. 6 in it was a large mansion of palatial aspect. This rather surprised the Captain, for the meetings of his Lodge at Ekaterinoslav had been held in the back parlour of a sordid tea-house. He rang, and the door was opened by a footman in livery, who closed it behind the visitor without a word; and then touched the button of an electric bell. Another footman appeared, relieved him of his cap and overcoat, and conducted him up a thickly-carpeted staircase into a chamber that looked like a lady's boudoir. The footman would have taken Paul's sword, too, but this the officer would not permit. He was beginning to feel uneasy by this time. The sight of a lady's fan lying on a pale blue satin ottoman did not tend to reassure him. On the table stood a silver samovar and a china tray, with two cups, out of which tea had just been drunk. What could all this mean?

During ten full minutes Paul was left alone, then a door was softly opened, and the officer stood transfixed with astonishment and horror on being confronted by a General in full uniform. He drew himself up and, with a trembling

hand, made the military salute. The General was not known to him by name, but he recognised his features from having seen him at reviews. He was a tall, swarthy man, with a stern face and bushy eyebrows. His thin clear-cut nose denoted the Circassian type, and his eyes shone like a wolf's on a dark night. He held a plumed helmet under his arm, and his breast blazed with a constellation of orders. Returning Paul's salute, he stopped at arm's length from him and proceeded to make three signals, which indicated that he was a member of a Nihilist Lodge. He laid three fingers of his right hand on his forehead, then on his lips, next on his breast. After this he covered his eyes for a moment with his two hands; finally he placed his hands behind his back, clasped them, and bent his neck, assuming the attitude of a prisoner who is manacled. These movements having been rapidly executed, he motioned to Paul to come and sit beside him on the ottoman, and said quietly—

“Be seated, Walitzin; we are going to have a talk.”

Paul obeyed; but the sensation he experienced was one of sickening dismay. Though relieved from the fear that had possessed him at first sight of the General, when he apprehended that he was going to be court-martialled for conspiracy, he now felt overcome by the thought that such a man as this General should be an accomplice of the Revolutionists.

Then it was true, as old Captain Snarischeff used to say, that Russian society was honeycombed, and that the Nihilists had confederates near the very steps of the throne? The

reflection was far from comforting to an officer who was beginning to entertain loyal feelings towards the Crown out of gratitude for having been kindly dealt with.

The General began to speak ; but he perceived that Paul was not yet collected enough to understand what was being said to him. So he paused for a moment, and commenced again—

“Walitzin, we are both working for the same cause,” he said. “I have shown myself to you in full uniform the better to prove how entirely I trust you, and also that you may have an exact idea of how important the revolutionary movement is since men in my position are participators in it. The fact is our plans are ripe now, and the moment has come for action. The Lodge of Ekaterinoslav has informed us that you are a man whose courage, nerve, and good faith can be relied on, so you have been chosen to be one of our instruments. To-morrow you will be on guard at the Marble Palace, and you will see the Czar there. . . . ”

Here the General lowered his voice, and went on speaking in whispers till Paul checked him with an exclamation of horror.

“General,” he cried hoarsely, as he rose, “you are asking me to act like a criminal. I will take no part in a dastardly deed of treachery and murder.”

“You forget your oaths of obedience,” said the General coldly.

“I never swore to be an assassin.”

“You took oaths to obey the orders of your Lodge what-

ever they should be, and to hold every act righteous which should tend to the deliverance of our country."

"Well, if I did I was wrong, and I retract my oath," said Paul disdainfully. "I answered your summons to-night with the intention of resigning. Your plots seem to me mischievous, and your principles untenable. I wish to break off my connection with the Brotherhood."

"That means that because your stomach is full, you think others have no right to be hungry," sneered the General; "but I must remind you, Walitzin, that you hold the secrets of our Association, and cannot leave us. If you do not fulfil your oaths you are a traitor, and we shall punish you as such."

"I suppose you will have me murdered—eh?"

"Oh, no," replied the General calmly. "If you do not obey the orders I give you I shall have you arrested as a Nihilist and transported to Siberia."

The cool audacity of this threat made Paul Walitzin stare. His lip curled, and he eyed the General for a moment as if he contemplated drawing his sword and cutting him down where he sat, like a noxious wild beast. The older Nihilist, however, had taken up a cigarette and lit it. After waiting a full minute to see what Paul would say, he blew a contemptuous puff towards him, and ejaculated:

"Look here, Walitzin, it is good for the interest of our cause that a useless Nihilist should be arrested now and then in order that the police may pride themselves upon having made a great catch, and be thrown upon a false scent

by the discovery of worthless papers. The victims we select for these sacrifices are open traitors or squeamish weaklings like yourself. I warn you that the net in which you are entangled will prove so strong that it will be of no use for you to try to slip, or break through it. Now decide upon what your course shall be."

"That which separates me from you," answered Paul defiantly. "I am no traitor, and your secrets are safe in my keeping; but I am not a cut-throat either, and if I am to stand in jeopardy because I desire to preserve my honour untarnished, well I shall claim the protection of persons who, perhaps, will prove as powerful as you."

"You are thinking of Princess Valdine, I dare say," retorted the General, with an evil laugh. "Well, try her, my friend. Good night."

Paul Walitzin did not require a second word of dismissal. He saluted his queer superior as he had done before, turned his back upon him, and left the room. Downstairs the two footmen came forward with his cap and overcoat, and ushered him out with every mark of respect. It was a March night, but not too cold, and Paul had come on foot. When the door closed upon him, and he stood on the pavement of the street again, he paused for a moment irresolute, as if to ask himself whether he had not been dreaming. Was it possible that he had been conversing with a real General who had instigated him to a nefarious deed of bloodshed? and could it really be that he was in danger of transportation as a penalty for non-compliance? The thing seemed so absurd

that the idea of an elaborate hoax suggested itself to the young officer's mind.

He glanced down the street and saw an empty droski coming at a jog-trot—its three horses jingling their bells tunefully. The driver rocked on his seat and howled snatches of a song, being presumably drunk, as it is the custom of his craft to be of an evening.

"Hey! istvostchik! tell me whose house that is," cried Paul, hailing him to stop, and pointing to the mansion he had just left.

"That, my gracious lord, is the residence of General Count Brekoff. Long may he live," answered the coachman, obsequiously, when he had reined in.

"What, Brekoff, the commander of the 2nd Infantry Division?"

"The same, my gracious lord; and now where shall I have the happiness of driving you?"

"To the Valdine Palace," answered Paul, as he jumped into the trap, "and go quick."

* * * * *

In less than ten minutes Paul had reached the house of his patroness. It was late, but he saw lights in the windows of the front reception-room; and so he handed his card to the dvornik, craving that the Princess would favour him with a private audience of a few minutes. The hall porter sent up this request by a major-domo, and the reply came down immediately that Captain Walitzin was to be shown upstairs.

He went panting with emotion, for the communication he had to make was one which he would not have dared to lay before any other soul alive, but the Princess. He was ushered into a card-room brilliantly lighted, but deserted. The Princess entered almost immediately. She was superbly dressed; and her arms, neck, and hair all glittered with jewels. There was an inquiring look in her lovely eyes, and a something soft in her manner, which induced her visitor to feel sure of her support, and to speak to her without reserve.

He sobbed like a boy. Then told her all in a few words, hurriedly, and with an imploring accent.

"Well?" she said rather coldly when he came to a halt—and she toyed with her fan as she spoke—"What have you decided to do?"

"Can you ask, madam?—Why, in mercy tell me what I *must* do! I come to you for advice."

"If you put it in that way," said the Princess, articulating each word slowly, and raising her glance archly from her fan till it met his eyes and seemed to fascinate him—"If you want my advice, I should . . . recommend you to keep your oath."

"What! my oath to the Nihilists?"

"Yes; I rather like soldiers who keep their oaths," said the Princess, turning away, but glancing at him over her shoulder with a smile of parting—a smile that seemed to say: "Be a man—don't blench."

"Great God!—you a Nihilist too!" exclaimed Paul in an agonised tone; and he staggered from the room, feeling as

if the earth failed beneath his feet, and as if there were a red



veil before his eyes, covering all things with a bloody mist.

III.

THE discovery that Princess Valdine was a Nihilist led Paul to suppose that her voyage to Ekaterinoslav had been undertaken on revolutionary business—probably to confer with the chiefs of provincial Lodges—and that, in befriending him, she had from the first designed that he should serve as an instrument to the conspirators. The unfortunate officer could only reason upon all this vaguely, for his mind was off its balance ; but he felt a deep sense of humiliation at having been duped. His gratitude towards the Princess vanished. He was justly incensed to think that she and her accomplice Brekoff had coolly projected to make him run all the danger of a sanguinary enterprise, the profits of which—if any—would accrue to themselves.

The dreadful nature of the dilemma in which he stood placed soon forced him to compose his nerves. Self-preservation was becoming his first duty ; but at the same time he thought almost as much about the Czar as about himself. It filled him with pity to see this lonely ruler of millions living amongst hidden enemies, betrayed by those whom he trusted most, threatened by those he loved best.

Walitzin was a soldier. He could have joined in a plot which would have led to an insurrection with fair fighting in the streets. He could have rallied to the revolutionary flag, and, if necessary, have suffered the death of a mutineer without feeling himself dishonoured ; but this dark savagery

of cowardly murder to which he was being instigated made his blood indignantly boil.

What should he do? As he walked home through the empty streets he stopped more than once to ask himself this question. The uppermost idea in his mind was that he ought to warn the Czar; but how to warn him? After what had befallen this night Paul would not have trusted a single one amongst the Czar's servants—no, not the Chief of the Third Section himself. If such persons as General Brekoff and the Princess Valdine were Nihilists it might well be that even higher people were enrolled in the accursed conspiracy. Apparently not a Russian could be trusted except the members of the Czar's own family—the Grand Dukes and Duchesses, who were exposed, like His Majesty, to the designs of the assassin, the poisoner, and the incendiary.

"I'll warn the Grand Duke Alexis," ejaculated Paul suddenly. "He is honorary Colonel of my regiment, and I have a right to ask audience of him. I'll make a full confession, and throw myself on his mercy. I shall be safer then than now."

Muttering these words to himself, he quickened his step, and made haste to reach the Marble Palace. But as he walked he did not perceive that two men in cloaks were following him. They had not lost sight of him since he left the Valdine Palace. When he slackened his pace or stopped, they concealed themselves within the recesses of the doors; when he walked fast, they did so too. They followed him

as far as the Marble Palace, and when he had gone in, one of them drew out a whistle and blew it three times. Instantly the guard of fifty men on duty at the Palace turned out with their two officers, and the command was given to fix bayonets. The two men who had followed Walitzin beckoned the officers aside, and spoke to them in whispers.

All unconscious of what was taking place outside, Paul, in the vestibule of the Palace, had asked the servants if he could see the Grand Duke Alexis. Hearing that His Imperial Highness had retired to rest, he requested to be shown into a room where he could write a letter that must be taken to the Prince at once. The sight of Paul's uniform and of the cross on his breast caused him to be obeyed at once. He was introduced into a waiting-room, and stationery was brought him. But he had scarcely written three lines before the door opened and the room was filled with soldiers, headed by two officers with drawn swords.

"What is the meaning of this?" cried Paul, starting up, with his hand to the hilt of his own sword.

"Seize him!" exclaimed a man in a cloak stepping forward. He wore the black braided cap of an officer of police. "Paul Walitzin, I arrest you for conspiracy. You came here to take the Grand Duke Alexis's life."

"Who told you that foul lie?" gasped Paul, but before he could speak another word he was seized, overborne, and forced to the ground. Handcuffs were put on to his wrists, and his ankles were tied together with whipcord. Then the police officers, for there were two of them, fumbled in his pockets.

"There is a revolver," exclaimed one, "and a dagger and a parcel of letters."

"The dagger and the letters were brought by you," shouted Paul, suffocating with rage.

"Tut, tut, we shall see," answered the official. "Now, off with this man to the House of Detention, and see that he is well guarded." Paul was lifted up between four soldiers by his arms and legs, and carried out like a bale of goods. As he began to shout for help, calling upon the Grand Duke by name, one of the police officers forced a ball of cotton wool into his mouth. Then he was helpless.

* * * * *

The next day a rumour was circulated through the city that an attempt had been made upon the Grand Duke Alex's life by an officer of the Cuirassier Guards. The details did not get into the papers, for no official currency was given to them, and in such cases editors understand that the authorities wish to hush a matter up. But everybody knew the supposed culprit's name, and it was said that documents of a most compromising character had been discovered in his lodgings. Two or three days later it was bruited that Paul Walitzin was to be tried for his life, and that the President of the Secret Court-Martial would be General Brekoff.

All this was true. Documents in heaps had been found in Paul's apartments, but it is needless to say that he had no knowledge of them; nor did he even hear that such a dis-

covery had been made. He was kept a fast prisoner in one of the cells of the House of Detention—an unwarmed place that was almost pitch dark, and where his only food was black bread and water. He saw nobody, and when he appealed to his gaolers to tell him if he was going to be judged he could get no answer.

Thus ten days elapsed, and at length one afternoon Paul was called out of his cell, and conducted into one of the upper rooms of the prison. Here he found three officers in full uniform seated at a table, the chief of them being Brekoff. This rascal was examining some papers which formed the indictment against Paul, and which had been drawn up by a fourth officer, who acted as prosecutor, and sat at a table apart.

Guards encircled the prisoner behind, and a pair of policemen with drawn swords stood between him and the table. But when Paul caught sight of Brekoff he turned deadly pale, and all hope expired within him. He remembered the words, “*You are entangled in a net so strong that you will not find it possible to slip or break through it.*”

“Are these men to be my judges?” he asked in a broken voice of one of the soldiers, who made no reply.

“Yes, I am here to judge you,” answered Brekoff quietly. “Will you plead to the charge that is preferred?”

“Not before *you*,” exclaimed Paul contemptuously. “You are a Nihilist yourself; and a double-dyed scoundrel into the bargain.”

“Well, we will hear the witnesses, then,” rejoined the

General, quite unruffled. "They are not many ; but their evidence will put you to silence."

The burlesque of a trial was then gone through. The police-agents who had arrested Paul were called, and deposed to finding a dagger and letters in his pockets, also some treasonable documents in his rooms. The while the prisoner stood with his arms folded, disdainful and despairing. He concluded that both Brekoff's fellow-judges were Nihilists like himself, and that it was of no use to ask them for justice. He did not even seek to contradict the evidence offered ; and when asked by Brekoff whether he had anything to say in defence, he answered that he would appeal to the Grand Duke Alexis in person.

"He is my Colonel," he said ; "and cannot refuse to hear me."

Thereupon the three judges laid their heads together, and General Brekoff said :

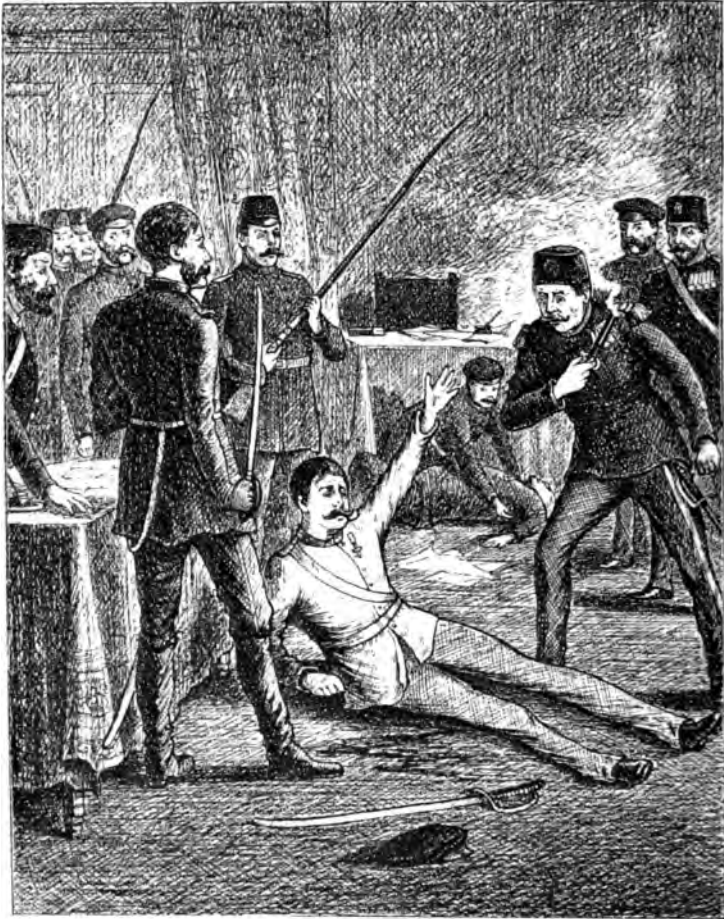
"Paul Walitzin, for the heinous crime of which you stand convicted, you are sentenced to be degraded and shot. The execution will take place to-morrow."

"To-morrow ? And where ?"

"In this prison : the city being under martial law we are empowered to order summary execution."

Paul had stood till then so quietly that his escort were off their guard ; but on learning Brekoff's sentence, which not only doomed him to death but deprived him of all chances of self-exculpation, the prisoner darted forward, wrenched a sabre out of the hands of one of the two policemen, and

rushed to the table. As he did so, the second policeman



made a slash at him and cut him over the cheek, whilst a soldier thrusting with his bayonet pierced him through the

shoulder. All this was done in an instant; but it did not save Brekoff.

Though drenched with blood Paul whirled his sabre aloft over Brekoff's head, the felon General started back ducking down to avoid the blow, but the chair tottered and he lost his balance. The cut descended full upon his brow, cleaving his head and killing him outright before he could lift a hand to protect himself. But at the same moment one of the other judges caught up a revolver from the table, and two shots resounded. Paul, mortally wounded, staggered back, and fell on the floor of the Court.

He was not yet dead, however. He managed to prop himself on an elbow, and to gasp while the life stream flowed from him :

“Long live the Czar ! Tell his Majesty I said that. These men are his enemies. Perdition to them——”

And once more he murmured before dying: “Long live our ‘little Father’—long live the Czar !”

* * * * *

The funeral of the “martyred” General Brekoff was attended in great state by several members of the Imperial family ! and his widow was granted a handsome pension. The Princess Valdine, who had a taste for literature, composed him a feeling epitaph. As for Paul Walitzin, his name was given out to the world as that of one of the most dangerous of conspirators ; and after his death many persons were arrested as his accomplices. Moreover, the police got

credit for having obtained valuable clues to divers other Nihilist plots. Possibly Princess Valdine knew better than the police what these clues were worth ; but she was a great lady, whom nobody could think of interrogating on such subjects.

She continues to flourish in great honour.



HIS MAJESTY'S BARBER.

I.

TILL very lately there used to live at Geneva a natty little old gentleman, who was generally known as "The Minister." It was said that he had been Prime Minister to the late King of Swabia, but had made an incautious use of some State secrets, and was living in exile under police surveillance. He was always dressed in a faultless frock-coat, a white cravat, a glossy new hat, and pearl-grey gloves; and when he took his daily walks in the Corraterie he used to be followed at twenty paces distance by a muscular servant in livery. That large class of people who speak without reflecting on what they say were wont to declare that this footman was a detective who held "The Minister" in perpetual custody, but the shrewder surmise of the thoughtful went to show that he was the mere body-guardsman of a master who feared to walk abroad unattended.

"The Minister" so-called had a handsome suite of apartments in the most bustling street of the city, the Rue du Rhône, and the life he led was by no means one of retirement. He was accustomed to dine at the *tables d'hôte* of the

numerous hotels thereabout, and he willingly engaged in conversation with passing tourists, English, French, Russian, or American. But he avoided Germans, and there could be no doubt that there was a mystery in his antecedents, for he would never receive anybody privately at his rooms, and nothing could persuade him to enter a railway train, a boat, or a carriage. He often went to the theatre, but if it rained or snowed as he was coming out he returned home on foot sheltered under his footman's umbrella. Once he fell ill, and had to send for a doctor, but that medical man never saw him alone. A middle-aged, owl-faced house-keeper, in a silk dress, used to remain in the sick-room, and the door of the chamber was left ajar, so that the patient might by a word summon the footman on duty in the ante-room.

The servant who held guard over "The Minister" at home was not the same who attended him abroad. Both were stalwart, active, obedient men, who had been well trained to their work, and kept a perfect watch over their tongues. The porters and waiters at the hotels where "The Minister" dined had often questioned the out-door servant who used to sit in the vestibule, while "The Minister" was at table, but they had never elicited from him any information beyond this, that his master was Baron Schwartz, a kind, worthy gentleman, who walked about with an attendant, because it pleased him so to do. A few weeks ago, however, Baron Schwartz suddenly died; and then, some of his papers having fallen into the hands of persons who saw no

motive for preserving silence as to their contents, the very strange story of "The Minister's" past life became public.

His real name was not Baron Schwartz, but Armand Lobligeois. He was a Frenchman, and had never been Prime Minister in Swabia, but simply barber to Otto, king of that country. The post of barber to his Majesty, however, was in its way a very important one, and many statesmen as well as courtiers envied Monsieur Lobligeois's privilege of chatting half-an-hour daily in freedom with the King. Otto was a great gossip; and the French hairdresser was just the man to suit him. He retailed all the small talk of Hofstadt, the capital; brought early news of impending scandals, and told his Majesty what the Hofstadters thought on political subjects. As his situation of Court *coiffeur* and his known intimacy with the King caused him to be patronised by the Swabian aristocracy, he was in a position to collect much of that confidential intelligence which goes to make up secret memoirs, and is not always despised by grave historians. But though Monsieur Lobligeois knew better than most men what were the little strings that set great events in motion, he was very reserved in making use of this knowledge except to entertain his Royal Master.

The King trusted him very heartily, and Lobligeois was wise enough not to abuse the influence he possessed for foolish purposes. He was on the whole a well-meaning and beneficent barber. Though not very scrupulous as to whose reputation he pecked at so long as he could make his Majesty

laugh aloud whilst his Royal countenance was covered with lather, he would often exert himself to bring legitimate grievances before the King, and sometimes succeeded in getting a piece of official injustice quietly remedied. For such doings Lobligeois was not loved by placemen. He had been sneered at in newspapers as one whose position at Court reflected no great credit on the King, and more sins were laid to his door than he had ever committed; but for this he cared little, as he made a good deal of money, and was treated with more respect than generally falls to members of his profession.

Otto the First was not exactly an exemplary monarch. Knowing that kings are more exposed to temptations than other men, he made abundant allowances for himself, and never troubled himself to inquire whether his subjects were pleased with his doings. He was obstinate with his Ministers; cool towards the clergy of his kingdom; and a martinet with his soldiers; but he was very affable towards the ladies who composed the troupe of his favourite theatre, and never grudged the money of his people in bringing first-rate singers, actresses, and dancers from afar to disport themselves before him. In course of time it happened that by dint of enjoying himself his Majesty became fat, unhealthy, and short of temper. His hair turned grey prematurely, and he developed a fondness for wine which clothed his nose in imperial purple. Lobligeois was the only man who could coax him into a good humour; and often he would keep the barber in conversation for a whole

morning, asking for his advice on all sorts of subjects not connected with shaving and hair-cutting.

This was flattering to the barber, but disquieting at the same time, for Lobligeois began to fear that the King's system was breaking up; he was, therefore, very glad to learn one morning on arriving at the palace that his Majesty had fallen in love over night, and was evincing quite a new and unexpected zest in life.

"My dear Lob," said the King, as the barber tucked a linen cloth under his chin, "you must restore my hair to its natural colour. It is absurd for a man to wear grey hair at my age."

Lobligeois thought so too. "Your Majesty has very fine hair," he said. "A little dye will soon take the grey out."

"Time has played me some shabby tricks," continued the King of Swabia. "This discoloration of my nose and the swelling of my girth are not due till a man is past fifty, and I am barely forty."

"They can be removed too, sire," answered the barber, plying his brush; and as his Majesty's mouth was now covered with soap he was fain to keep it shut while Lobligeois delivered a short lecture on dietary. Now the King of Swabia had often declared that dieting was "moonshine;" but having fallen in love he was disposed to take a different view of the case.

"I suppose I shall have to be more careful about my food," he remarked presently; "though really it would

surprise you to see how little I eat. I have hardly any appetite left."

"That must be the cook's fault, sire," replied the Frenchman, with his usual tact. "Perhaps if he were less sedulous to tempt your Majesty with curious dishes he would find that you had an appetite for plain food."

"Humph! I don't know," said his Majesty frankly. "To tell you the truth, Lob, I think a good deal of my fat comes from those scoundrelly French wines. I have heard that no man ever grew thin on champagne."

"Drinking so moderately as your Majesty does, there must be something wrong about the wines if they produce any injurious effect upon you," replied the courtly barber. "I believe that occasionally, owing to circumstances in the weather, grapes of the finest vintage get saturated with properties which promote adipose tissue—sugar, for instance."

"But I always drink dry wines," said the King.

"Certain dry wines contain more sugar than the others," rejoined the barber, not in the least embarrassed. "The sweetness has gone out of it, but the starch remains, and it is the starch that fattens. However, nobody would describe your Majesty as fat; the slight encumbrance of which you complain, and which merely comes from a superabundance of health, can be made to disappear in a few weeks."

Truth has to be conveyed to kings in very delicate doses, and carefully wrapped up as above. However, the King of Swabia, who, like most men, knew as much as any doctor could

tell him about his own constitution, entered voluntarily into a new course of diet, and, thanks to the ardour of the passion within him, persevered in it. In about three months he had reduced himself to a convenient size, and had become once more as rosy and presentable a monarch as his Swabian subjects could expect for their money. Meanwhile his hair had been dyed to a muddy hue of chestnut. The colour pleased his Majesty well enough, because he could but imperfectly judge of its effect in the looking-glass; but it dissatisfied Monsieur Lobligeois, who had an artistic soul and a Frenchman's love of doing things neatly.

Lobligeois did not tell the King that he thought his hair contemptible to look at, for that would have been cruel, and would have put his Majesty out of conceit with his appearance to no good purpose; but he entered into correspondence with all the principal dye manufacturers of Europe, feelingly, and indeed vehemently, exposing the shortcomings of all chestnut dyes then in vogue, and urging them to invent a better one. He also spent much time in the laboratory of his handsome shop in the Königs Strasse, and paid an impoverished *savant* to help him in concocting dyes with which he experimented (often with strange effects)—*in capitibus vilis*—on the heads of old ladies of the middle class. He was too cautious a barber to play tricks with the pates of the aristocracy.

As everybody in Hofstadt knew a little about everybody else's business, it soon came to be reported that Monsieur Lobligeois was in quest of a new dye for the King's head;

and a great many inventors came to the shop in the Königs Strasse bearing compounds more or less efficacious. But none pleased the fastidious taste of the barber, who wanted a dye that should endow the hair with the gloss of nature and youth. At last there came to his shop, one afternoon, an exceedingly seedy youth, who described himself as a chemical student, and who produced from some paper wrappings a quart bottle of blue glass filled with a mixture which he affirmed to be the finest dye ever heard of.

"I discovered the secret of making it by a pure chance," he said; "just try it upon some heads of false hair, and in half-an-hour you will see them turn to the most splendid tint of light brown or auburn."

"How much do you want for this bottle?" asked the barber, removing the stopper and sniffing the contents suspiciously.

"I'll sell you the secret when you have given it a fair trial," answered the student. "I want nothing till you are satisfied. The best of the dye is that it will work as well on dead hair as on live."

"We'll see," replied Monsieur Lobligeois, and leading the student into his laboratory, he took up a chignon of greyish hair, and proceeded, according to the directions he received, to sponge it lightly with the new dye. He then did the same with two other chignons, one brown, the other black. In half-an-hour these three tails of dead hair had been stained to the most beautiful tint of real, natural chestnut that had ever gladdened a barber's eyes. The student was


very modest about his invention, and once more declined to receive any immediate payment for it.

"I'll call again in a week," he said. "You'll find enough in the bottle to make plenty of experiments with ;" and he went away, after giving his name and address.

Lobligeois was overjoyed at this piece of good luck. He could not cease from admiring this lovely new dye. Presently a favourite actress of the Royal Theatre came to his shop ; she was a little on the wrong side of forty, and hinted, with the usual periphrases, that she should like her hair "freshened." The Court hairdresser thought this would be a good opportunity for giving the dye another good trial before using it on the King's poll, so he went to work on the actress, and was literally staggered to see her re-bloom under his hands as though the tide of her years had suddenly rolled back. Her own gratification, as may be supposed, was quite equal to his. He had freshened both her hair and eyebrows, and she swept out of his shop with a happy air of being armed for conquest against all mankind.

The next morning Lobligeois went as usual to wait upon the King, and took the blue bottle with him. He did not tell his Majesty that he was going to try a new dye, for he did not like to say that those which he had used till then were of inferior quality ; but in half-an-hour, when he had shaved, shampooed, and brushed his royal master, the latter started at beholding the reflection of his face in the glass.

"Why, Lob, I look as I did on the day of my coronation !" exclaimed his Majesty.



"It is health which gives your Majesty such a bright



J. R. P. & S. G. C.

complexion," answered the barber, putting his bottle into a boxwood case.

"Well, but just see my hair," cried the King; "it surely didn't look like that yesterday."

"Pardon me, sire, the improvement in your Majesty's appearance has been noticeable day by day. Everybody is saying that you must have taken a new lease of youth—the ladies especially."

"If one lady thinks so, that is enough for me," answered the enamoured monarch.

Hereupon Lobligois made his best bow and withdrew, whilst his Majesty's two valets came in to dress their master, and started, as the King himself had done, to see the extraordinary change in his hair, eyebrows, and moustache, whereby his face seemed to be quite re-juvenified.

II.

Now it chanced that on that day the King of Swabia was to hold a review of his troops. It was in sweltering hot weather; and about two in the afternoon the news was brought to Lobligois's shop that his Majesty had dropped off his horse under a sun-stroke. His Majesty was not so popular that this accident excited much commiseration; many rather blamed him for not taking better care of himself and his soldiers. But the tidings threw poor Lobligois into an awful panic; for simultaneously the maid of Fräulein Sophie Kobbs, the actress whose head he had dyed the day before, came running into the shop and exclaimed—

"For Heaven's sake come and see my mistress. What did you put on her head? She's stark mad with pain, and the doctor can't make it out."

A horrible presentiment seized upon Lobligeois, and squeezed his heart in a vice. He caught up his hat and ran to the actress's house. That unfortunate lady had been rushing about her rooms and bumping her head against the wall in agony; she was now being held down on a bed, and screamed hysterically whilst a doctor was applying iced lotions to her head. The skin round her eyebrows was hideously swollen and discoloured, and the cuticle of her head was in the same condition. Ice was quite powerless to relieve her pain. After raving and struggling frantically to rise from her bed, she swooned, but on recovering consciousness she uttered another series of appalling shrieks, declaring that her head was on fire. Her reason was quite upset, and the unfortunate barber, frightened almost out of his wits by the mischief he had unwittingly caused, fled from her house on hearing the doctor say that she must be removed at once to an asylum.

Lobligeois hurried off to the King's palace. It was not his usual hour for attending to his Majesty, so that he could not gain admittance. He had no business there except at half-past eight in the morning, unless he was specially sent for. Nevertheless his situation was so critical that he asked for a sheet of notepaper, and wrote a note to the Chamberlain of the palace, begging that he might speak a few words to that official in private. The Chamberlain, Count

von Tansfort, had always been outwardly friendly to Lobligeois, treating him as a potentate whom it would not do to offend, and he caused him to be shown up immediately ; but with the Chamberlain there was closeted the Prime Minister, Baron von Garnichthat, and two or three other statesmen, who had never eyed the French barber with much affection, and they now demanded somewhat sternly to know his business. Lobligeois trembled at their grim, glum looks, and guessed that matters were going very badly indeed with the King.

"Is—his—his Majesty dead?" he asked, his heart seeming to leap into his mouth as he put the question ; then in a paroxysm of remorse he added : "Noble sirs, I must tell you the truth. I—I fear this catastrophe is of my doing," and thereupon he related the whole story of the new dye, supplied by the strange student, and told how the accursed drug had already operated on Fräulein Kobbs.

The statesmen and the Chamberlain exchanged a few glances while the barber spoke, and it was Baron von Garnichthat who addressed him in answer—

"I do not think his Majesty is suffering from any of your drugs. He had a sunstroke, which as you know is always a serious matter."

"But his Majesty's eyebrows—and—and upper lip?" faltered the barber.

"There is nothing the matter with him," said the Prime Minister coldly. "Fräulein Kobbs has perhaps a very delicate skin, or she may have injured herself with some of

those preparations which actresses use; at all events you may rest assured that you have not been instrumental in injuring the King."

"Might I be permitted to see his Majesty?" asked Lobligeois, so greatly relieved that he could hardly articulate for joy, but at this request the Chamberlain shook his head.

"His Majesty is under care of the doctors," he said. "You had better go home, Lobligeois, and say nothing about what you have just told us. The story might do you mischief if circulated."

"It might lead to the suspicion that you had poisoned his Majesty; do you understand that?" asked the Prime Minister sharply.

"Yes, I do, noble sir," stammered the trembling barber.

"Then bear it in mind," said the unamiable Minister, and he did not deign to make a response as the Court barber, lately his rival in the King of Swabia's private councils, retreated bowing.

It was, of course, not Lobligeois's interest to tell a soul about the suspicious hair-dye. He felt indeed very thankful to the Minister and Chamberlain for having let him off so cheaply. They might have had him thrown into prison, and how should he have exculpated himself had he been accused of compassing the King's death?

Who was that seedy student who had sold him the dye? Perhaps some ferocious, revolutionary villain. However, the barber was so far comforted by the Premier's assurances that he truly believed his Majesty was not suffering from the

effects of the dye. Fräulein Kobbs' affliction must have been a mere coincidence, due, perhaps, as the Premier hinted, to the injudicious use of other drugs.

Lobligeois was deeply attached to the King, who had been so good to him; and it was with a sad heart that he read the bulletins of his Royal Master's health published on the following days. His Majesty was stated to be suffering from a brain fever, the result of sunstroke. It became necessary to appoint a Regent, and the Swabian Parliament at once summoned the heir presumptive, Otto the First's cousin, to this post. In a few days more the King was said to be past recovery. Then one morning all the papers appeared with black borders, and public proclamation was made of his death. During His Majesty's illness there had been some revulsion of public feeling in his favour, but on the whole it could not be said that the people were sorry for his demise. He had tried their patience overmuch. The new King, on the contrary, was a young man, full of promise, genial, kind, and of liberal intentions, as heirs presumptive mostly are. He ascended the throne amid hopeful acclamations, and possibly there were only two persons in Hofstadt who sincerely grieved for the late monarch—Lobligeois, the barber, and the lady with whom Otto the First was in love, and whom it was rumoured that he had intended to marry, despite the remonstrances and entreaties of his Ministers.

This lady was the daughter of a Baron von Blumendael. She was very good as well as fair, but had found no favour with Baron von Garnichthat, because some very ingenious

political plans elaborated by this old gentleman, and in which, as it seemed, the welfare of Christendom was involved, would have been upset had she become Queen of Swabia. A few days after the King's death she and her father were requested by the Chief of the Police to take a trip out of the country for the benefit of their health; and at about the same time the police sent for Monsieur Lobligeois, and hinted to him that it would be well if he retired from business, and departed to his own land. It was notorious, explained the Chief, that he had held a very confidential post in the late King's household, and it was not expedient that a barber should be supposed to hold important State secrets. At the same time there was no disposition to hurry Monsieur Lobligeois; he had better make arrangements to sell his establishment on advantageous terms, and leave the country at the end of the year. It was then May, so that he would have rather more than seven months in which to prepare for his departure. Of course he must maintain a prudent reserve in the meanwhile, and reveal nothing of what he had ever heard said at Court.

Persons who have intimate dealings with Courts are accustomed to witness private and high-handed interferences with the liberty of the subject, wherefore the French hairdresser was not surprised at receiving notice to quit Hofstadt. He had amassed a pretty tidy fortune, and had no reason for lingering in Swabia now that his days of glory were gone. The new King did not shave, and when his Majesty's hair

wanted cutting, it was one of his valets, a *quondam* regimental barber, who did the business—very ill, as anybody may imagine. Lobligois could no longer style himself Coiffeur to the Court, and was fain to remove the Royal Arms from over his shop front. A conscientious barber cannot be expected to think highly of a kingdom in which the capillary art is thus allowed to fall into unmerited contempt, and Monsieur Lobligois naturally felt that no ties of gratitude or esteem bound him any longer to Swabia under its new dispensation.

So he set about finding a purchaser for his shop, and soon signed a contract by which he was to yield his lease, stock, fixtures, and goodwill at the end of the year; but meanwhile he left off attending to customers in person, because he was so often plagued with indiscreet questions about the late King's doings and private style of life. To the barber's astonishment and great disgust, the Government was allowing the late King's memory to be traduced in all sorts of foul lampoons. As the Swabian Press enjoyed but a moderate amount of liberty, it was evident that these effusions could only be published by official tolerance, and indeed it looked as if many of them were actually printed and circulated by order of the police. What could be the object of the Government in thus defaming the poor dead King? Lobligois often asked himself this question, and the more he pondered over it the more was his mind troubled with dismal and suspicious musings.

There were several facts about Otto the First's decease

which could not but strike his barber as most strange. In the first place the King's two valets had disappeared. It was said that they had been pensioned off and left the country. But why had they left the country, since they were Swabians? Mademoiselle Sophie Kobbs, the actress, had vanished also. Lobligeois heard from her maid that after a few days' confinement in an asylum she had recovered her senses, but had lost all her hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes. Under the circumstances it would have been quite natural if Fräulein Kobbs had come to the Court hairdresser's shop, and had given him a strong piece of her mind ; but she did nothing of the sort, and abandoned Swabia without leaving a trace of her whereabouts.

Then another curious thing happened in connection with the mysterious hair-dye. Lobligeois tried hard to find the seedy student who had sold him this composition, but the man had given a false name and address, and could not be discovered. Lobligeois next determined to have the remnant of the dye privately analysed ; but one day, on extracting the blue bottle from the cupboard where he had locked it up, he perceived that the dye had been poured out, and some ordinary preparation substituted. There could be no doubt about it, for the dye which had so sadly injured Fräulein Kobbs was of darker colour than that which had been put in its place ; and it became evident that somebody must have tampered with the cupboard in the laboratory.

Who had done this? Probably one of the shop assistants,

who was in the pay of the police. But why had he done it? Why was he in the pay of the police? What interest had the police in making the dye disappear? There was enough in these guesses to make the French barber feel very uncomfortable, so that he looked forward rather impatiently to the day when he might turn his back on the realms of Otto the Second.

Christmas at last arrived, and all the barber's preparations for going away on New Year's Day were completed. Christmas was kept as a great festival in Swabia. There was snow on the ground, skating on the rivers, playing of waits in the streets, and junketings in all the houses. Monsieur Lobligois, being a bachelor, was about to give his assistants and servants a holiday on that day, close his shop, and go out to take his meals at a restaurant. He had done this as usual on the Christmas Day which was to be his last at Hofstadt, and he returned home towards seven to enjoy a quiet evening over his Parisian newspaper and a cup of coffee by his parlour stove. Having put on his dressing-gown and slippers, he lighted a spirit-lamp to boil water, set out his cup, sugar basin, and liqueur case, and proceeded to grind his coffee in a hand-mill, for he liked that his beverage should have the fragrance which comes only from berries fresh ground. He was in the midst of his absorbing occupation when he was startled by the violent ringing of his shop-door bell.

Being alone in the house, M. Lobligois rose to answer the summons; but he was frightened. So much had occurred

to try his nerves in the course of that year that a sudden loud ring like this was enough to set him trembling. He caught up a candlestick in one hand, a fire-shovel in the other, and shambled into his shop; but before opening the door he asked, timidly,

“ Who’s there ? ”

“ Open quickly on a matter of importance,” answered a female voice from outside.

M. Lobligois unbarred his door, and a woman, wrapped in a large cloak, whose hood completely hid her face, rushed in.

“ Are you alone ? ” she inquired, breathless.

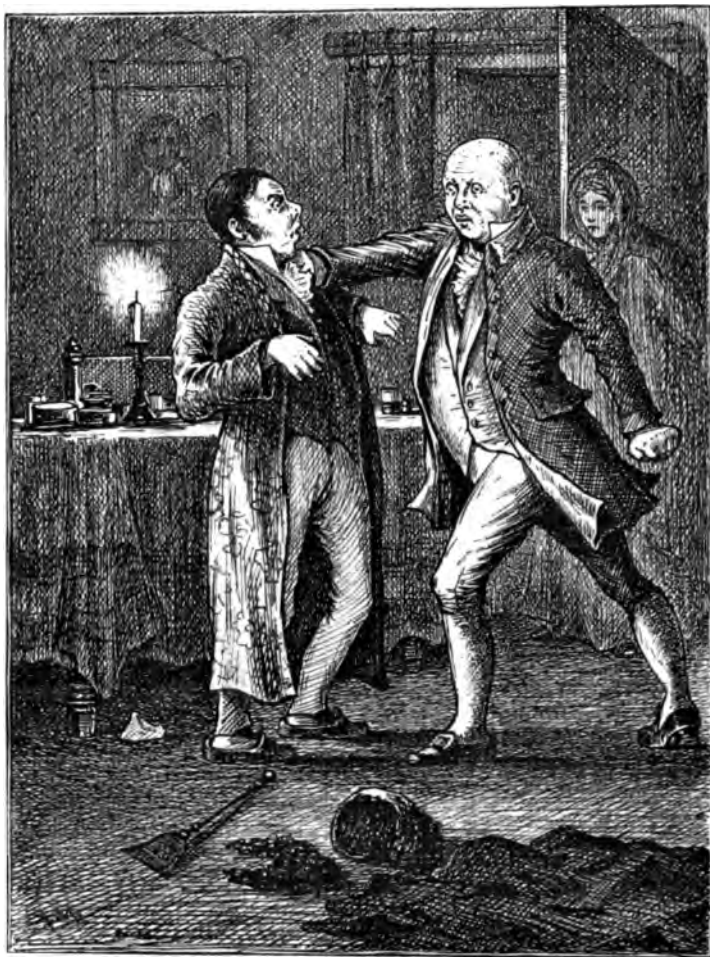
The barber was afraid to say Yes or No. He stared and stammered. But the woman, without waiting for an answer, returned to the door, and beckoned to somebody in the street. Thereupon a man in a cloak and furred bonnet strode in. The door was closed again, and the man and woman together hustled the haircutter towards his parlour. He was amazed, and more alarmed than ever, but his visitors left him no time for reflection.

“ We must speak with you in private,” said the woman, helping to push him forward.

They all entered the parlour, then the man abruptly threw off his cloak, his fur bonnet, black wig, and a false beard, and revealed to the barber’s horrified vision a head without hair or eyebrows. At the same time a familiar voice exclaimed in a passionate tone,

“ Do you recognise me, miscreant ? ”

"Mon Dieu—mon Dieu!" cried the Frenchman, whose



blood seemed to freeze in his veins, "is it possible—the KING?"

"Yes, the King, you villain," shouted the hairless man, seizing the barber by his shirt-front and shaking him. "Now, tell me, you scoundrel, what base plot you concocted to rob me of my reason and of my throne? Who instigated you? Who were your accomplices? Speak the truth, or by the heavens above us I'll take your rascally life with my own hand!"

"Pity, sire, pity!" cried the wretched barber, clasping his hands and trying to sink on his knees. "You accuse me wrongly. My gracious master, I am quaking with joy at finding you alive again, and I pray that I may live to see your enemies confounded. If I were the instrument in any plot against you, I swear that I acted without knowledge. Let me tell you the story of that dye I used on the last day I saw you. Ah, *mon Dieu*, it seems I have been right, then, in suspecting that it was poisonous!"

Lobligeois burst into tears, and there was such an accent of sincerity in his speech that the woman who accompanied Otto the First laid a hand beseechingly on his arm.

"Sire, I think we had better hear this man out," she said. "I do not think he is an enemy of your Majesty."

"Madam, you are right. If I could give my life to restore his Majesty to the throne, I would not grudge it," sobbed the barber, fairly wallowing on the carpet. "Oh, sire, speak a single word to assure me that you do not think me a traitor."

"'Sire?' 'Your Majesty?'" echoed Otto the First bitterly, as he released his hold of the barber and threw

himself into a chair. "These are no titles for me now. Do you know what has happened to me? One morning, about six months ago, I awoke from what appeared to me to have been a long illness, and I found myself in this odious plight, hideous, disfigured, and in a lunatic asylum. It seemed to me that I had got into hell. I told my keepers that I was the King, but they laughed at me. I had been represented to them as a madman who imagined himself to be the King. When I shouted and demanded my liberty I was put into a strait waistcoat. Had it not been for this lady, the Baroness Marie von Blumandael (the King raised his companion's hand gratefully to his lips as he pronounced her name), I should have lost my reason and life in that place of torment; but this lady—this angel, suspecting that I had been the victim of foul play, devoted herself to the task of discovering where I was. With her father's assistance, and at great expense, she found me; bribed some keepers to abet my escape, and here I am. But what I can do next is another question."

"Oh, sire, you must claim your own," cried the barber, in agitation. "You must denounce the infamous plot against you, and bring your enemies to justice."

"Who would believe my story?" answered the King; "and if it were believed, what Swabian would care to see me reign again? It seems that I have been so vilified in print that the people think I was a demon, and would rise in arms sooner than let me disturb the present occupant of the throne. But enough of this. Tell me first all you

know of the plot against me. It will be time enough afterwards to decide how I ought to act."

Thus exhorted, Lobligeois endeavoured to control his emotion whilst he related all that had occurred to him in connection with the bottle of poisonous hair-dye, but his narrative was often interspersed by sobs, for it twinged his innermost heart to see his King reduced to such a lamentable and unsightly condition. The King listened intently to all he heard, and so did the Baroness von Blumendael, who had thrown back her hood and displayed the beautiful face, pale with emotion, and eyes streaming with tears.

"Well, it was a dastardly plot," said the King, when the barber had finished speaking. "I see signs of Garnichthat's handiwork in every turn of it; but it is quite clear I can do no good by making a stir just at present. I must allow my successor to exhaust his popularity first, and come forward only when the people shall have grown tired of their new favourite—I suppose in about a year or two. For the present my object must be to get out of the country, and the Baroness will assist me in that. As for you, Lob, may I rely upon you joining me, and putting yourself at my orders as my chief witness as soon as you leave Hofstadt?"

"Oh, sire! do you doubt me?" exclaimed the barber, clasping his master's hand and embracing it. "Are not my life and my fortune yours? I will follow your Majesty to the world's end!"

"Very well, then; on leaving this go to Paris, and you will find a letter of instructions awaiting you at the post

office." The King as he said this put on his black wig and false beard again. "I must be off now," he added, wrapping himself in his cloak and drawing his fur bonnet over his forehead. "Go to the door, Lob, and see if the coast is clear."

Even as he spoke, in his old authoritative voice, there was a new ring at the door. "Hush!" said the barber; "I think this must be my assistants coming home after their holiday; but, sire, one of them—I cannot guess which—is, I suspect, a police spy; so pray be careful. Lock this door when I am gone, and do not open it unless I scratch twice."

"Where does this other door lead to?" asked the King, pointing to the opposite side of the room.

"To my kitchen, sire, and beyond the kitchen is a yard with a low wall, and beyond that the garden of an hotel."

The King made no reply, and Lobligeois shuffled out. He passed into his shop, opened the door, and at once saw several persons standing outside; but before he could speak the glare of a bull's-eye lantern thrust close to his face blinded him, and he heard a harsh voice cry,

"A man and a woman entered your house about two hours ago."

"No—o," stammered the barber.

"It's false," replied the voice. "Seize this man."

And the words were hardly uttered when a cloth was pressed over Lobligeois's mouth, and he was rapidly lifted and thrown into a cab, which drove off.

III.

TEN years then elapsed, and the world heard or saw nothing of Lobligeois during that time. The unfortunate barber had been thrown into a State prison. In the gloomy fortress of Kaiserburg, which stands on a dizzy height, a very stronghold of oppression, he was kept a close captive; and it was in vain that he asked why he was detained. He could get no answer to his questions, and heard no news of what was going on in the world. It is probable that he would have ended his days in prison, but for a fortunate accident which occurred in the tenth year of his captivity. A furious mountain storm one night blew down the oldest part of the prison, in which his cell was situated. He managed to crawl out of the ruins unhurt, and found himself free. In the fortress it was supposed he had been killed, and his death was reported to the Government.

Lobligeois, however, tramped on his way through Swabia, got out of the country, and after a series of adventures which are not within the scope of this narrative he reached Switzerland, and placed himself under the protection of the Swiss Government. He told his story, and inquiries were set on foot, which established that the main facts of it were true. The result was that an emissary of the King of Swabia was despatched to Switzerland, and made the ex-Court barber certain secret proposals which the Swiss authorities advised him to accept. Lobligeois bound him-

self to make no communications of any kind to anybody respecting the State secrets which had come to his knowledge, and in consideration of his silence he was to receive a pension of fifteen thousand thalers a year. The Swabian emissary carefully refrained from admitting that the barber's story about Otto the First was true; he merely owned that Lobligeois *seemed* to have been imprisoned without trial, and was to be indemnified accordingly out of the gracious bounty of Otto the Second.

Lobligeois elected to reside in Geneva, under the name of Baron Schwartz. He felt safer in Switzerland than elsewhere; but he was so afraid of being kidnapped or assassinated that he would never enter a vehicle of any sort, whether boat or carriage, and he paid the Grand Council of Geneva so much a year to allow him the services of a couple of brawny policemen, whom he dressed up as footmen, and who acted as his body-guardsmen. Baron Schwartz lived about a dozen years at Geneva, and by a bitter irony of fate came to be nicknamed "The Minister,"—he who had suffered so much from Ministers.

To the end of his life he never ascertained what had become of the ill-fated Otto the First, or of the Baroness von Blumendael. From a few letters found among his papers it was inferred that he had paid an inquiry office to make researches for him; but to no purpose. Crown mysteries, like Crown jewels, are well guarded.

DOWB'S COXCOMBERY.

I.

CAPTAIN LORD JULIUS DOWB was no relation to the "Dowb" who was "taken care of" during the Crimean War; but he was a young nobleman of wealthy family who had a great number of influential connections. This explains how he got his captaincy when he was but just turned twenty-two, and had not distinguished himself otherwise than by travelling in the train of his father, the Marquis of Doubleyew, when the latter went to carry a Garter to H.S.H. the Prince of Rigmarolen-Singsongaten. Lord Julius was in the Guards then; but on getting his step he was advised to exchange into the 25th Hussars, who were fighting in Afghanistan, in order that there might be no outcry against jobbery. So Dowb rather ruefully ordered himself a new uniform and packed up his trunks. He did not object to war in the abstract; but he preferred Pall Mall during the season, and it was the height of the season just then.

To console him for his exile Lord Julius was allowed to take with him the soldier who had been his valet in the Guards—a jolly Yorkshireman called Tom Bussle. This fellow had not his equal for mixing the soda and B. which

Dowb usually quaffed of a morning on getting up, or for cooking the devils off which my lord mostly breakfasted. He was besides very nicely particular in the care he took of his master's well-appointed wardrobe. Lord Julius's Indian outfit included twenty dozen pocket-handkerchiefs; a gross of shirts; twenty-four pairs of boots; and a valise full of cravats and perfumery. His uniforms, dress and undress, filled three mottled tin boxes, and his civilian attire six. His lordship could not really have travelled with less. He was ready to let himself get shot at by Afghans; but he could not waive his right to be properly dressed on occasions where his life was at stake.

The troopship carrying a number of relief drafts was to steam on a Tuesday. In the afternoon of the day before—just an hour previous to his leaving London for Portsmouth, Dowb alighted from his brougham at a house in Eaton Square. He was clothed in his regimentals, with a sword dangling at his side; and he thought good to apologise for this costume as if it were an absurd one when he entered the drawing-room where Lady Merrybell and her daughter Beatrice, two of the nicest people among Dowb's acquaintances, were engaged on some crewel work.

"Why should you call your uniform a livery, and affect to be ashamed of it, Lord Julius?" laughed Beatrice nervously. "I am sure you are as proud of it as other officers."

"'Pon my soul, I don't know why I should be proud of wearing a coat which is sported by a number of fellows, not

one of whom I know from Adam. Don't know a soul in the 25th, I assure you."



BEATRICE.

"Well, you will make their acquaintance, and I hope be popular with them. They are all gentlemen, I suppose?"

"Well, I don't expect to meet my tailor among them, if that's what you mean: but I wouldn't answer for my tailor's son. All sorts of odd creatures get into the Army now, and it comes rather hard upon a man who has always

lived with one set of chums to go amongst a lot of others who don't know anything about his ways, you see."

"When do you sail?" asked Beatrice, to change the subject.

"To-morrow before twelve, I believe."

"And you have paid all your farewell visits?"

"Yes, I reserved this one for the last."

There was a moment's silence. Lady Merrybell rose, and, under pretence of giving an order, glided out of her room. Beatrice went on with her work, but she kept her eyes bent on it, and the colour on her cheeks deepened. It would have been evident to the meanest observer—had a mean observer been present—that there was "something" between her and Lord Julius Dowb. The officer stood with his back to the mantelshelf, stroking his moustache, and appearing rather embarrassed as to what he should say next—an unusual mood with him, for he was the coolest creature alive. At last he said abruptly—

"Is there anything I can do for you in Afghanistan, Miss Merrybell?"

"I expect you will be so busy there you will not have much time to think of others, Lord Julius."

"I shall always think of you though."

"Well, then, if you can remember it, bring me back one of those gold collars which the Afghan chiefs wear round their necks."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, a tiger skin, but you must have killed the tiger

yourself; and of course you must snatch the gold collar yourself from the neck of the Afghan."

"That's how I understood it. There would be no fun in the thing otherwise," responded Lord Julius quietly.

"No, I was only joking," exclaimed Beatrice, looking up with a tearful smile. "Bring yourself back alive and well, and that's all your friends ask for."

"Will that satisfy *you* too, Beatrice?"

"Yes," she faltered, blushing, for he was standing very close to her then, and his lips bent to touch her forehead as soon as the words were spoken.

Five minutes later Lord Julius left Lady Merrybell's house, looking as composed as ever; so that his coachman was far from suspecting what a very important die in his master's life had been cast within the last half-hour. Lord Julius jumped into his brougham, and was driven to Waterloo Station. That night he slept on board the *Crocodile*, and the next day by noon was already out of sight of England.

II.

COLONEL PTARMIGAN, of the 25th Hussars, was not the pleasantest officer in the British army, and his temper had been but little improved by six months' campaigning on the Indian frontier. Major Burncross, the second in command, was, perhaps, not the most agreeable of Majors, and he had lost what little amiability he once had in the hardships of

warring. The Major and the Colonel hated each other, and a subaltern who attached himself to the one was certain to incur the implacable animosity of the other. Unfortunately Ptarmigan could not put down Burncross, for the latter was an excellent officer, who did his duty well, whereas the Colonel was what sub-lieutenants call a duffer. It was Burncross who really commanded the regiment, and Ptarmigan was obliged to hearken to his advice, for he was sure to get into some scrape if he did not. But the Major's advice was always most ungraciously given, and the Colonel, in following it, loathed the giver more and more, and felt relieved of any obligations of gratitude towards him.

All this will explain how it was that perfect harmony was not reigning among the officers of the 25th when Lord Julius Dowb joined their station at Khardrec along with his servant, nine trunks, and several smaller parcels. Having been shown to his bungalow, Lord Julius took a bath, dressed, perfumed himself, and went in full uniform to report himself to his Colonel. He flashed in his brilliant clothes from head to foot as if he had been extracted from a dressing-case; and both the Colonel and the Major, who were in the orderly room when he arrived, stared at him astonishingly. Their own uniforms were in the seediest condition. However, Dowb's rank and his known influence at head-quarters obtained him a civil reception from the two seniors, and it was not till the morrow that the inevitable difference of opinion (it was sure to come) arose about him. Ptarmigan, who was a noodle, thought good to say that he

didn't want any coxcomb in his regiment. He liked a soldier to look like a soldier, and not like a ballet-dancer.

"Well, but you wouldn't have the man soil his clothes so as to make them look at once like yours?" sneered the Major. "Supposing you give him time to take the gloss off them in campaigning?"

"A likely fellow to campaign with," laughed the Colonel boisterously, for that was his only way of drowning Burncross's voice. "My opinion is he'll take a smelling-bottle on to the battle-field because the odour of powder will be too much for him."

"Wait and see," said the Major.

"Tut, tut, man; I know you plume yourself upon being a judge of men, but that is only one of your many conceits. Aha!"

The Major shrugged his shoulders, and resolved that he would be a friend to Dowb because the Colonel despised him. It so chanced, however, that Burncross had his one very weak point, and that was tigers. He had once shot a tiger himself under great difficulties, having but two native servants with him, and being mounted on a horse instead of an elephant. To make people appreciate this feat he was continually talking about tiger-shooting, and magnifying its dangers. So a few days after Dowb's arrival he invited the latter to a friendly tiffin, and showed him the skin of his tiger—the famous tiger—which he used as a counterpane.

"Fine thing," said Dowb, examining it with interest through his eyeglass. "I must shoot a tiger myself."

"Shoot a tiger yourself!" cried the Major. "Why you seem to have no idea of the difficulties of such a thing. Why, sir, when I killed that beast" . . . And hereon the Major related for Dowb's benefit the story which, in one form or another, he had told fifty times already in the mess-room.

"Well, sir," said Dowb when he had heard him politely to the end, "I don't know that I could manage the thing so neatly as you did; but I've half a mind to stroll out into the jungle one of these days and take my chance of a pot-shot."

"A pot-shot! Why, you're crazed!" screamed the Major. "Didn't you just hear me say that the tiger lies hidden in the long grass, and takes a spring of twenty yards at you before you know where he is? Why, you must have elephants, natives, and be a party of half-a-dozen all round, with two rifles a-piece, before you tackle a tiger."

"The elephants and natives would rather bore me," said Dowb, who did not mean to be rude, but was simply expressing an opinion. "I should like to go out with only just a rifle."

"Remember that we're in war time, and that you mustn't go out with a rifle for sporting purposes without leave."

"Well, I'd just as soon go out with a revolver. I suppose there would be no harm in that?" said Dowb coolly.

From that moment Dowb's name was obliterated from Major Burncross's good books. The tiger-feat—the ever-memorable tiger-feat, which was a glory to the 25th, and extolled by all the officers and men in it, save Ptarmigan—

had been, if not slighted, at least made light of! Burncross could not forgive such arrogance. Imagine, however, what must have been his disgust and mortification when a few days afterwards he was aroused at early morning by a great commotion in the neighbourhood of the barracks, and, looking out of the window, saw a crowd of natives and soldiers hustling round an ox-cart on which lay two superb tigers, a male and female, and three whelps. The whelps were alive and mewling after their kind. Lord Julius Dowb followed in the wake of this procession, smoking a cigarette, and fanning himself with a cambric handkerchief, for it was getting hot.

Down went Major Burncross in a dressing-gown and slippers, and nearly ran bump against the Colonel, who had hurried out from his own bungalow in the same attire.

"Who did that?" said the Major, pointing to the tigers.

"I did, but it's not much to boast of. I had a good revolver, and it was a fine moonlight night. The pair were rather surprised at my standing quietly and blowing my smoke towards them, so I had my shot at them before they had made up their minds how to act. The tigress is touched on the forehead, you see; the tiger got his pill on the spine as he was turning tail. Both were killed outright without any roaring or fuss. It was the whelps who screamed most. When I had gone to the village and come back with some natives and this cart, we found the whelps miauwling round the bodies, so we helped them into the cart by their tails. Queer little things, ain't they?"

The Major was almost suffocated with astonishment and envy.

"Do you mean to say that you had the foolhardiness to go out alone with a revolver, contrary to the rules?"

"I had leave from the Colonel," answered Dowb.

"Yes, I gave him leave," assented the Colonel, laughing; "but I say, Burncross, this throws you altogether in the shade, doesn't it? You can't brag any more about *your* tiger-killing after this—eh—eh?"

The Major said nothing, but retreated into his bungalow.

He was the most crestfallen Major in the British army. When next he appeared on parade, and for ever after, he wore a chastened, subdued look, like a man who has received a lesson that will last him a lifetime. As for Dowb, he treated him with a punctilious politeness which was intended to bar all approach to familiarity. Dowb tried in vain to make friends with the Major. The Major would not be friendly.

Colonel Ptarmigan, on the other hand, was all honey to Dowb, once the latter had humiliated Burncross. But as ill-luck would have it, the Colonel, too, had his very weak point, and this was *gold collars*! During a skirmish he had encountered an Afghan chief hand to hand, had caught him by the collar, and slain him. The collar, breaking under the chief's weight as the latter fell backwards, had remained in the Colonel's hand as a trophy of victory, and Ptarmigan showed it proudly to everybody as a token of what valour

can effect. After Dowb's estrangement from Burncross he invited the former to luncheon, and showed him the collar, saying,

"Doesn't it remind you of Goliath's, eh? I should think there were a pretty good number of golden shekels shining on here."

"Fine collar," said Dowb slowly. "I promised to bring home one of the same sort myself."

"You'll have to buy one of them," said the Colonel, chuckling, "for it's not so easy to get them off the Afghans' necks."

"I'll try," said Dowb, "just please tell me once again, Colonel, how you gripped the fellow who wore this."

The Colonel, nothing loth, showed how the fellow had been gripped. Dowb appeared to be paying close attention. He thanked Colonel Ptarmigan for the lesson, and said he would endeavour to do like him in the next battle. Ptarmigan liked his modesty, and thought him a very discreet and amiable young man.

But ten days after this there was a battle, and the gallant 25th had to go into action. The charging of these troopers was magnificent, and the slaughter terrific. Poor Burncross was made to bite the dust; Ptarmigan received a shot which rolled him off his horse into a puddle, where he lay on his back unable to move. Whilst in this dignified position he saw Dowb gallop past him all covered with the grime of battle, and waving his sword, on which were spitted like rings three chieftains' gold chains.

"How did you get those?" shouted the Colonel, as he tried to prop himself on one elbow.

"Tried your dodge, Colonel, of giving a good wrench; it breaks the hasps neatly," answered Dowb, in a matter-of-fact way, as he reined in.

"And you spoiled those three chiefs yourself?"

"Oh, it wasn't difficult," replied Dowb tranquilly.

"Then I leave the regiment in good hands," said the Colonel, as he sank back with a sigh on the Captain's arm, for Dowb had dismounted and was propping him. "See, they'll almost all have fallen to-day, and you'll be in command of what's left of 'em to-night. My account's settled, I feel. Dowb, my boy, I took you for a puppy, but I was wrong. Do me one favour, please."

"Anything I can, Colonel."

"Drag me yonder then to where poor Burncross is lying. If there is any life in him we ought to shake hands before going together to our court-martial—up—up—up there; you know where I mean, my boy."

Lord Julius Dowb lifted his chief, and had the satisfaction of seeing him and his whilom foe shake hands. A few days later he had the greater gratification of seeing them both recover, and in recollection of the battle day they each made him a present—the Major his tiger-skin, the Colonel his gold collar.

III.

IN due time Major Lord J. Dowb returned to England, and one of his first visits was, of course, to Beatrice Merrybell, to whom he presented the gifts above-said. They were pronounced charming. "But I am sure you killed neither the tiger nor the chief?" said Beatrice, laughing.

"No, these were presents from my two seniors in command," replied Dowb gently.

"Well, that's better than if you had risked your life for such trifles, eh?" continued Beatrice archly.

"Certainly," responded Lord Julius, "and it saves me the trouble of having to relate adventures of hairbreadth 'scapes and so forth."

"Ah! you think so," laughed Beatrice, who had been hiding a newspaper behind her; "you forget that we have war correspondents in these days. Now, sir, give me an immediate account of how you spoiled the three chiefs and slew the two tigers; and tell me what have you done with those three dear little whelps!"

M.P. IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

THE people of Brindleton had behaved so badly to their excellent M.P., Mr. Meeking, that when the dissolution was announced that worthy gentleman declared he would not seek the honour of re-election at their hands. He confessed that he had only arrived at this determination with sorrow, but it was rendered imperative by the fact that the relations between himself and his constituents had ceased to be characterised by that invariableness which he—Mr. Meeking—considered for his part to be desirable, if not essential.

In thus making known his intentions and ideas Mr. Meeking alluded to a series of very stormy scenes, and to a long, irritating correspondence which had been going on during the previous six years between himself and three gentlemen who might be called the Grand Electors of the borough of Brindleton—Mr. Coxey, a hatter; Mr. Wimble, a pastrycook; and Mr. Mones, a Dissenting preacher. These three had repeatedly assured Mr. Meeking that he had belied their expectations, that they had no more confidence in him, and that at the next election they would feel that they were discharging a public duty in ejecting him from his seat. Howbeit, when his letter of resignation reached them they rubbed their heads in sore perplexity, for they

well knew that they should never again find a Member so amiable and obliging as this one, who had at length turned, like the proverbial worm, under the pressure of their hoofs.

Mr. Meeking was a gentleman of property who had done an immense deal of good in Brindleton before it had occurred to the electors of that borough to send him to Parliament. He had not sought this honour; it had been thrust upon him rather against his wish, for he had no very decided opinions as a politician, and took a serious view of the responsibilities which his duties would lay upon him. However, he was petitioned by a requisition so numerously signed that it amounted almost to unanimity, and in the event his supporters got him returned unopposed. For this Mr. Meeking felt thankful, and he showed his gratitude in many generous ways. Members of his committee were constantly coming up to London, and he would invite them to dine at his club, and give them orders for the Strangers' Gallery, or for the theatres. Sometimes they asked him for stalls at the Opera, for beds at his house, for invitations to parties at the mansions of the aristocracy; and he always complied with their requests, so far as in him lay.

But they demanded of him more substantial things besides—posts of emolument or Government favours for themselves or their friends, and in these matters also Mr. Meeking showed himself helpful. His committee had originally consisted of nine members, and of these six soon contrived to settle themselves, through Mr. Meeking's agency, in snug berths, at the ratepayers' expense. The

M.P. for Brindleton disposed of a good deal of influence, as do all men who are rich, respectable, honest, and who have no personal ambition. One of Mr. Meeking's committee-men, who was a doctor, got appointed physician to a London hospital; another, who was an exciseman, obtained a post in the Customs; a third, who had been a sub-editor of the *Brindleton Standard*, got introduced to the staff of a first-class London daily; and so forth. There remained at the time of the dissolution but three of Mr. Meeking's committee to be satisfied—Messrs. Coxey, Wimble, and Mones, already named—but the M.P. had found it impossible to ingratiate himself with these, so exorbitant were their requests.

Coxey, the hatter, required a Government contract to furnish the whole British army with helmets; Wimble, the pastrycook, wanted to supply all her Majesty's gaols with flour and Australian beef; while Mones, the Dissenting preacher, considered the Government ought to purchase a million copies of a tract of his on the abuses of tobacco, and distribute the same gratis over the United Kingdom and the Colonies.

For having failed to meet their demands Mr. Meeking had been harassed, bullied, and threatened by the three patriots whom Brindleton delighted to honour on account of the fine principles which they emitted when they took their walks abroad, or met over the board-tables of different charities. There are some Members who would have shown Messrs. Coxey, Wimble, and Mones downstairs; Mr. Meeking, being a tranquil man, took the less fatiguing course of simply placing his resignation in his persecutors' hands.

This event caused something like consternation in Brindleton, where the ex-M.P. had many friends among people who had never asked him for anything, and liked him because of his goodness and liberality. But the whole truth about the causes of the resignation was not known, and Mr. Meeking was the last man to tell it.

Two candidates at once came forward—Mr. Blagg, a bustling barrister from London, who wanted to work his way through a political career to a puisne judgeship, or something better; and Mr. Carmidgeon, a squire who held property in the county. Now Carmidgeon was a close-fisted churl, who would have seen Messrs. Coxey, Wimble, and Mones all three hanged before treating them to a feed at his club; while Blagg was a fearfully keen customer, upon whom all the arts of wheedling or intimidation would have been lost. He wanted every scrap of influence within his reach for himself, and was not the man to fritter it away upon others. Coxey, Wimble, and Mones, having taken stock of these candidates, decided that they would not do at any price; and so they went in a lamentable deputation to their late Member, entreating him that he would, “for the sake of their dear Brindleton,” reconsider his determination.

Mr. Meeking was not a humorist, else he might have enjoyed the sight of the three whilom, arrogant faces bent upon him with so suppliant a look. As it was he contented himself with pointing gravely to a heap of piled letters on his table, and said :



“ ‘ In any case the brotherly chiding of well-wishers ought not to be received in a vindictive spirit,’ interposed Mones.”

Face p. 339.

"Gentlemen, you have assured me over and over again that I had forfeited your confidence."

"We wrote those words in a parliamentary sense," rejoined Coxey, who had not read "Pickwick" for nothing.

"And it was not I who wrote them," chimed in Wimble, the pastrycook. "I never quite agreed with those who blamed you in this borough."

"In any case the brotherly chiding of well-wishers ought not to be received in a vindictive spirit," interposed Mones, the Methodist preacher.

"Well, gentlemen, you made my duties a little difficult, and I think it is better that our connection should cease," answered Mr. Meeking, rather nervously, for he was a shy man, who disliked "scenes." "Besides, I have made arrangements for supporting Mr. Blagg."

"Mr. Blagg!" exclaimed the three committee-men in a tone of dismay.

"Yes, Mr. Blagg; he is a hard-worker, patient and firm, and his views coincide more nearly with mine than do those of Mr. Carmidgeon."

"But we won't vote for Blagg," shrieked Coxey, the hatter. "What has he ever done for Brindleton, this Londoner, whose very name is unknown to us?"

"Then you can vote for Mr. Carmidgeon," answered Mr. Meeking quietly. "*He*, at least, is no stranger to you."

Here the conference ended. Mr. Meeking was not to be shaken. He had been made to swallow so many leeks by the trio of Brindleton worthies that he felt as though he

had had more than enough of this nourishment. Nothing could have induced him at that moment to come forward for Parliament again, so Messrs. Coxey, Wimble, and Mones went away with fleas in their ears.

Meanwhile something like an agitation was beginning to manifest itself in Brindleton. It had got to be suspected that Mr. Meeking's motives for resigning were not wholly connected with political reasons, and some among the more independent burgesses expressed their intention of finding out "what was what." These good people were somewhat baffled, however, by the attitude which Mr. Meeking assumed in standing up for Mr. Blagg. The ex-Member stated in effect that every generation has need of new men, and that he for his part represented the past rather than the future. He besought the electors to vote for Mr. Blagg, who would advocate the interests of their town in an earnest spirit, and advance the cause of all progressive legislation generally.

Somehow, though, the people of Brindleton did not like Mr. Blagg. He talked too much, and had evidently too keen an eye to his own advantage. In his canvass he made no way at all; not a soul would give him a promise of votes except on the proviso that Mr. Meeking did not come forward. Mr. Carmidgeon found himself pretty much in the same case. "If Mr. Meeking comes forward, we'll vote for him," said the persons whom he canvassed; "if he doesn't, perhaps we'll vote for you; at least, we'll see about it."

The upshot of this was that after a while both Mr. Blagg and Mr. Carmidgeon announced their intention of with-

drawing from the contest sooner than throw away their money "in the dark," as they put it. Then Brindleton stood in the odd predicament of having no candidates at all.

A borough without candidates does not occupy a dignified position. Messrs. Coxey, Wimble, and Mones quaked when they perceived that, owing to their misconduct, there was no possibility of getting any respectable man whatever to court their suffrages. In their perplexity they went to the Sheriff, who expounded to them the law of the land to this effect:—"You are bound to elect somebody, no matter whom. The writ which your Mayor will receive to this effect is tantamount to an order. You can't ignore it."

"But we cannot find a candidate," remarked Coxey, the hatter, piteously.

"Re-elect Mr. Meeking," responded the Sheriff.

"But supposing he won't sit?" Wimble humbly rejoined.

"Oh! that's *his* affair," said the Sheriff. "If he likes to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds he may, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer may refuse to let him retire in that way."

"Do you mean to say, then, that we can force a man to serve us in Parliament?" exclaimed Mr. Mones in agitation.

"Practically you may," replied the Sheriff.

"Well, then, we'll force Meeking," chorused the three patriots together, and Mr. Mones, the preacher, thumped his fist on the table the better to emphasise his threat.

That is why Mr. Meeking, notwithstanding all his objections, will shortly be returned, unopposed, Member for Brindleton.

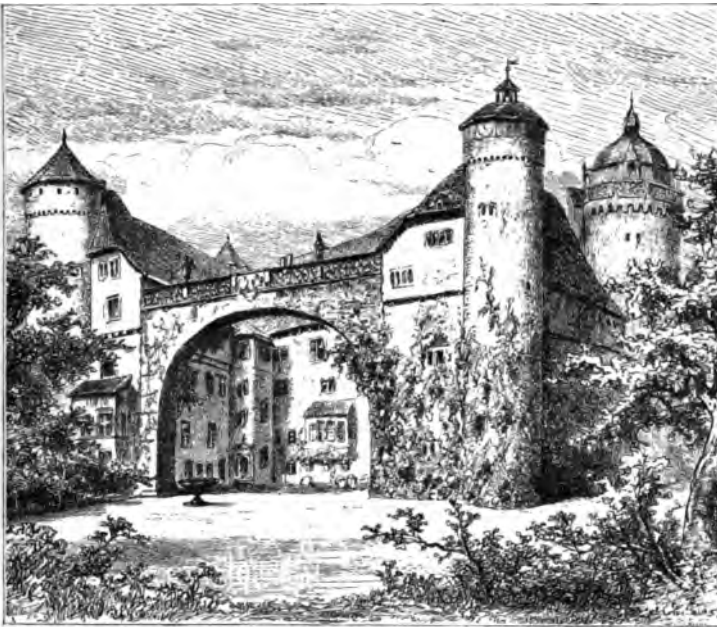
DR. OLIBRIUS'S SNAKE RING.

I.

BARON OTTO VON DONDERKOPF is a wealthy young Wurtemberger, who from an early age was attracted to the study of the chemical sciences. At school he used to blow up his comrades with explosive materials. He once sent six of them flying out of a window into a pond partly from fright, partly from the shock produced by placing a dynamite cracker on to the bowl of a professor's lighted pipe. Corporal punishment failed to convince Donderkopf that these experiments were undesirable. He grew more and more zealous in the cause of science as the down on his upper lip thickened, and by the time he passed out of the military cadet school to become an officer he had burned off his eye-lashes and eyebrows, had lost two fingers, half an ear, three front teeth, and covered his hands, nose, and parts of his cheeks with indelible blue stains.

In consequence he was ineligible for the King's service, and this pleased him well, for he was enabled to devote his whole time to the pursuit of knowledge in the society of the only professor who had ever appreciated him, the learned

Dr. Olibrius, of Heidelberg. This excellent *savant* was so much beloved by his pupil that the latter invited him to reside at the Castle of Donderkopf, gave him bed, board, and pocket money, and placed at his disposal a whole wing of the castle, which the Doctor transformed into a suite of labora-



THE CASTLE OF DONDERKOPF.

tories. The sums which the young Baron spent in fitting up these chambers with furnaces, crucibles, steam-engines, and electric batteries, to say nothing of precious metals, which, by some ingenious process, the professor used to convert into base ones—was considerable, but Otto von Don-

derkopf never grudged the outlay. He was persuaded that Olibrius would end by discovering the philosopher's stone, and the secret of perpetual movement, if not the elixir of long life, and he was proud to be the disciple of such a genius.

Olibrius, however, soon began to devote his exclusive attention to the mysteries of animal magnetism. He explained that there were men enough who studied the gentle art of taking away life by means of explosive substances, and the less popular one of prolonging human existence by quack medicines. As to perpetual movement, it would be of no practical use when found, and the philosopher's stone—*vulgo*, the way to make gold—would be equally superfluous to a young man already so richly provided with the world's goods as Donderkopf was. But Olibrius thought there lay a grand field for research in that science of mesmerism which enabled a man to throw a fellow-creature into fits of sleep, and to exercise an almost unlimited power over his or her senses whilst in that condition.

Hypnotism, said the doctor, was a sort of neurosis whose marvellous manifestations were only just beginning to be understood by physicians. To the vulgar, they appeared to have something diabolical in them, and they were banned by the clergy; but this, said Olibrius, only proved that the clerical mind loved to grope in darkness as much as a mole does. In fact, the doctor had ascertained that his pupil, the Baron, had a hysterico-nervous temperament peculiarly amenable to the influence of mesmerism, and he proceeded

to work upon him daily by planting him in a chair, and throwing him into a state of somnambulism which lasted sometimes for hours, and during which Otto became morally and physically his slave.

Strange things now began to take place at Donderkopf Castle. Olibrius held such power over the Baron that he had no need to perform "passes" over him in order to impart the mesmeric fluid which sent him to sleep. It was enough that Donderkopf should sit and stare fixedly into his eyes during a minute or so; then he dozed off with his eyes wide open, and the doctor had only to wish that he should do this or that to be obliged instantly. Donderkopf lent himself to these experiments with the docility of a child, but they were very fatiguing. The doctor used to cataleptise his arms and stick pins into them; he made him drink water, and wishing him to consider himself drunk, sent him tumbling about the house like an ill-conditioned pot-boy. Or he would tell Donderkopf that wasps were pursuing him, and the wretched Baron would start off in his sleep on a mad race through the long corridors of the castle, vaulting over chairs, tables, and balusters, and uttering such appalling howls that his servants used to hide themselves in the wine-cellar, thinking he was possessed by Satan. One by one these attached but timid domestics left his service, and the Baron was fain to content himself with the ministrations of a single menial, who, being deaf, could not hear his howls, and who was, moreover, generally tipsy, so that he observed all that went on around him with philosophical indifference.

But Donderkopf's hypnotic performances had a more painful result than the depriving him of servants, for they completely estranged from him the affections of the proud and plump Dorothea von Guldenburg, daughter of a nobleman whose estate adjoined Baron Otto's.

A man does not cease to have a heart when he addicts himself to science, and it so chanced that Donderkopf had a very soft heart indeed, upon which the Countess Dorothea had impressed her buxom image most deeply on the first occasion when the pair had met. Dorothea, however, was much too cautious a person to marry a man whom she believed mad. Much as she desired to please her noble father, who maybe had an eye on Donderkopf's estates, she declared emphatically as she poured out for the Count a glass of the Rhenish wine that he dearly loved, that she intended to be sole mistress of any man she married, and that she was not going to allow an Olibrius to share in her domestic empire. Being a good-natured girl, though, she gave Donderkopf every chance of mending his manners by inviting him to dinner, and serving him with a dish of venison and prunes specially prepared with her own fair hands. Donderkopf ate the prunes, but he could not promise to renounce the doctor's company.

"Olibrius," said the Baron, "held a power over him which was that of love as much as of magnetic fluidism, and it would be quite useless to try and shake off the yoke, inso-much that if he bolted the doctor's mere will would call him back from the farthest corners of the earth just as

effectually as if he had a pair of electric wires fastened to his ears."

"Ah, *lieber Himmel*, do not think to marry me then," exclaimed the Countess Dorothea in high dudgeon; "and I beg you never on any pretence to allude to this not-to-be-tolerated and much-to-be-deprecated-on-account-of-its-foolishness subject in my presence again."

Young Donderkopf went back to his castle very sad, and he endeavoured to keep his secret from Dr. Olibrius, but as he had completely lost his appetite, the doctor, who had always exhorted him to follow the notable example which he himself set in disposing of meat and wines, soon perceived that there was something amiss. His next step was to question the Baron while the latter was hypnotised, and by this means he, greatly to his disgust, ascertained the whole truth. One day Donderkopf, on awakening from one of his trances, perceived the doctor looking dismal.

"Ah, well, my son, this is the story of Dr. Faustus over again," said the learned man with a sigh. "Thou art enamoured, and thou wouldst have me employ all the artifices of science in order that thy wench may be compelled to love thee. Well, boy, thou art as a son to me; and I will do my best, but it is foolish work."

He heaved another sigh, then emptied a deep tankard of Bavarian beer, and remained for nearly an hour plunged in deep thought.

He did not tell the Baron of what he was thinking, and for several weeks afterwards the name of the Countess Dorothea

was not so much as mentioned between them. In the interval the Baron von Donderkopf grew leaner and leaner from disappointed love and starvation; but Olibrius became fatter and fatter because he drank much beer to console himself for having discovered in his pupil a human blemish. The doctor used now to closet himself alone in his laboratory, and to play some devilish game during several hours every day with a furnace and blow-pipes. The Baron put his eye to the keyhole to see what was going on, but could detect nothing but smoke. He interrogated his master, but that sage bade him hold his peace and be patient.

One afternoon, however, the doctor, having ate and drank much more than was usual even with him at dinner, staggered away from the table with a merry leer in his eye, and remarked that he should be able to make his beloved pupil a gift which would endear him to all female eyes. About half-an-hour afterwards, as the Baron sat solitary, and pensively chewed a walnut—the only thing he had eaten that day, so indescribably wretched was he—he heard a loud explosion, followed by lamentable cries for help. Bounding upstairs, he found the learned Dr. Olibrius stretched on the floor, mutilated, weltering, and evidently at his death gasp.

“My son, I’m done for,” moaned the sage. “It’s for your sake that I’m dying; I overheated the boiler, but anyhow my labours have succeeded. See this ring. I have concentrated into it all the magnetic power which I have been able to evolve out of Nature. Wear it, and it will render you irresistible in the eyes of women. Only be careful that you



"Bounding upstairs, he found the learned Dr. Olibrius stretched on the floor mutilated, weltering, and evidently at his death gasp."
Face p. 350.

never let it pass into the hands of one of the other sex, for she would never restore it you, and you would become her slave thenceforth. . . . Put it on. . . . That's it. . . . Now I will give you the secret for taking it off. Oh! oh!"

Here the unfortunate Dr. Olibrius emitted several gasps. His little speech had been interspersed with moans, and now his utterance seemed to fail him.

Donderkopf stooped to hear what he might have to say, but could not catch a word. The great man was lifeless. One is sorry to state that his pupil was not so immediately shocked by his untimely decease as he ought to have been, so intent was he in staring at his magnetic ring.

It was a trinket of three coils, made of priceless rubies, and having diamond eyes. So wondrous was its glitter, so brilliantly did every stone flash out, although there were no sunbeams to reflect, that the Baron could not take his eyes off it. He twirled it round on his finger, rubbed it on his sleeve, and turned it at every possible angle towards the light. Then he tried to take it off, but it would not leave his finger. It was in vain that he tugged; the ruby snake seemed to be endowed with life, and foiled all his efforts by tightening its coils till the Baron yelled with pain.

It now occurred to his dim-eyed mind that Dr. Olibrius had carried with him into another world the secret of removing the ring.

II.

It has been said that the Baron Otto von Donderkopf was, thanks to the pranks which chemicals had played to his physiognomy, not good-looking. One may add that Nature had not intended him for a handsome man, having endowed him with a nose of exaggerated dimensions, and with a pair of ears which stood out of his head like the curly handles of an Etruscan jug. But from the day when he walked abroad wearing Dr. Olibrius's snake ring he seemed to have become gifted with a 300-Adonis-power of attraction on the other sex.

At the doctor's funeral, which he had ordered to be conducted on a magnificent scale, and at which he exhibited much dutiful grief, a number of female spectators wept like waterspouts simply because they saw him cry. One or two fainted on the floor by his side, so as to have the pleasure of being picked up by him; and a certain elderly Baroness, famed for her austerity, cast such incendiary glances at him that her husband, who was still austerer, inquired what she meant.

But for all this young Donderkopf cared nothing. The only woman upon whom he was anxious to try the power of his ring was not present at the doctor's funeral.

The fair Countess Dorothea von Guldenburg had started for a tour over Europe with her father, and there was no saying when she would return. However, by questioning one of the female servants of Guldenburg Castle (who

declared herself ready to die for his sake), the Baron ascertained what route the noble travellers had taken, and he started after them.

His journey was as full of gallant adventures as that of a knight-errant cavalcading in Wonderland. If he entered a railway carriage where there were ladies a thrill seemed to pass over them: they would adjust their back-hair, smooth out their dresses, sigh as if the thermometer was at 90° in the shade, and rivet their eyes ecstatically on the little finger of his right hand where the ring was. Donderkopf tried the dodge of keeping a glove on his hand, but this served nothing; for the women only stared the more, as if they were minded that their fiery glances should burn clean through the kid. If Donderkopf walked into a railway buffet for refreshment, the damsel at the counter would leave off serving other customers to ogle him; and she would hug the coin which he tendered for her acceptance as if nothing would ever induce her to part with it. All this was at first very soothing, but it ended by becoming a prodigious bore, the more so as it drew upon Baron Otto some very ugly quarrels with members of his own sex.

Men were not amenable to the influence of the snake ring, and as Donderkopf remained as ill-favoured an object as ever in their eyes, they marvelled what on earth women could find to admire in him. The Baron was asked once or twice by vigilant fathers and brothers whether his intentions were honourable, and having artlessly replied that he had no intentions whatever, he found himself abused for a flippant

rifler. There were gentlemen who threatened to tweak his nose.

At last, having reached Paris, he played such unwilling havoc with the heart of a lady who sat beside him in a restaurant, that her husband, a captain of cavalry, first emptied a bowl of salad into the Baron's face, and then challenged him to a deadly combat on the morrow.

Donderkopf chose pistols, being the insulted party; but at the moment when his adversary was about to fire, the glitter of the snake ring blazing full into his eyes so blinded him that he missed his aim.

The Baron fired his own pistol into the air, ejaculating as he did so, "*Ach so!* It seems I am invulnerable. Well, that's worth knowing; for the first time another man flings salad at me, I'll force his nose on to the carpet, and oblige him to pick up the pieces with his teeth!"

The fact is our Baron was growing ferocious from not being able to ascertain the whereabouts of his Dorothea.

That high-born young lady had, however, come to Paris, too, and, what is more, the report of Baron Otto's fascinating achievements had reached her. At first incredulous, Dorothea grew by-and-by scandalised to hear that her quondam lover was earning a reputation as the gayest of Lotharios, insomuch that it was as unsafe to trust a damsel within his reach as to confide a pullet to the keeping of a fox. Needless to say that the curiosity of Dorothea was much piqued by these narratives, and she had begun to plot how she might get a sight of the renovated Otto, whom she used to

consider a madcap, when one evening hazard, the best friend of lovers, brought her and the Baron into contact during a ball at the Wurtemberg Legation.



How describe the charm of that sweet and never-to-be-forgotten meeting? Scarcely had Donderkopf entered the room when Dorothea became aware of his presence by a

delicious langour which stole all over her, and by a soft attraction which drew her towards that bewitching little finger of his.

Donderkopf, on his side, had perceived his sweetheart, and in a moment he stood near her, murmuring in the humblest accents, "Oh, Dorothea!"

"Oh, Otto," replied the maiden, laying a hand on the plump region where her heart was thumping a tattoo.

"I have never been an hour without thinking of you, Dorothea," continued the Baron.

"And I have thought ceaselessly of you also," responded Dorothea, whose pretty cheeks were like full-coloured roses.

"Let us leave Paris, Dorothea," said Donderkopf boldly. "I do not like its noisy life, and even to my not-unstocked- and-easily-to-be-replenished purse the hotel prices seem dear."

"And I cannot adapt myself to Parisian cookery," sighed the Countess, putting all her soul into her words. "Ah! Otto, do you remember our beloved venison stewed with prunes?"

"I could eat up a dishful on the spot," was the reply which Otto tenderly breathed into her ear.

No more flattering declaration ever left the lips of a lover, and from that ravishing moment Donderkopf and Dorothea were betrothed.

A few days later the pair had returned to Wurtemberg, and the banns of their forthcoming nuptials were published

in both their parishes. One thing, however, gave the bridegroom-expectant much uneasiness in the midst of his new-found bliss; for he could not help asking himself how his gentle Dorothea would like it when, after marriage, she saw all womankind honouring him with their attentions?

By this time he had tried every conceivable means of removing his ring, but without success; and yet he could not help remembering that Dr. Olibrius had said to him with his parting breath—

“Never lend your ring to a woman, or you will be her slave!”

If the ring was not to be taken off, what could the doctor have meant by this unseemly joke? The young Baron cudgelled his brains about this matter, and he was still intent on this operation when his wedding-day dawned, and sunshine and moonshine and all that can make such a day pleasant.

Merrily rang the bells in the old church of Donderkopf, and loud was the chorusing of female lookers-on, who declared that no such handsome bridegroom as the Baron had ever stepped up to the altar. The men did not appear to think so, but the bride did, and that was enough.

Well, the wedding-breakfast took place, and in the midst of that hospitable feast the new Baroness, turning to her husband, whispered sweetly: “What a beautiful ring you are wearing, dear; will you let me look at it?”

“Certainly, my love,” stammered the poor Baron, dismayed at this first conjugal request; but already Dorothea

had grasped his finger, and lo ! the ring glided off easily into her hand !

So this was the secret of the magic trinket, and Donderkopf had been enabled to part with it by the simple process of marrying, and putting his whole being in the possession of a girl he loved.

What more shall I add ? From the moment when Dorothea got the ring, all the power of pleasing which it had bestowed on her husband was transferred to her. She became in the eyes of all men the most delicious and worshipful of women ; but she was so good a wife that she disdained the homage tendered her, and chose to use the magic of her ring solely to chain her husband.

So Otto and Dorothea are a completely happy pair. Let me hope that this is the case with all other young couples who may have pleased to read my story.



PRINCE AND JEW.

I.

A FEW months ago the Society newspapers announced the engagement of Prince Paul Wiskoff, Court Councillor to the Emperor of Russia, to Miss Mina Dunne, eldest daughter of Richard Dunne, Esq., of Pottington Park, Middlesex. They might have added that Mr. Dunne was head partner in the firm of Dunne, Bagwell, and Bagges, merchant tailors, of Cheapside, E.C., but such items of information are often suppressed in these cases.

Mr. Dunne was in the habit of describing himself as a plain man; the architect of his own fortune, &c.; but he had nothing in him of the traditional parvenu who came to London with half-a-crown in his pocket, and converted that coin into a million sterling before his hair had turned white. The foundations of Mr. Dunne's fortune had been laid by his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, who had all three been highly respected tailors on the premises which Richard Dunne subsequently enlarged, when he took Bagwell, his foreman, and Bagges, his principal cutter, into partnership, and went in for a grand system of pictorial

advertisements on the hoardings of the capital, and the ceilings of underground railway carriages. Richard himself had received a first-rate education at the Merchant Tailors' School, where the higher classics were well whipped into him by the present Venerable Archdeacon Hesse. He had also a finely-cultured talent for art. We are betraying a little family secret in disclosing that it was he who designed the pictorial posters of his firm, drawing pictures of gentlemen in extremely tight clothes: "*This style, unique, 42s.,*" &c. He had likewise invented the "Derby" coat, a most convenient garment, called after the earl of that name, and which could be turned at the wearer's pleasure.

Mr. Dunne was, in fact, quite a man of his time, and therefore he understood that Prince Paul Wiskoff was not courting his daughter simply under the impulse of love. The young people had met at Brighton, where Mina was staying with an aunt, and the Prince had proposed soon after hearing from this relation that Mina would have a couple of hundred thousand pounds as her marriage portion. Mina, who was a pretty, soft-hearted little girl, accepted her lover out of hand, for he was a most glorious specimen of the human species: six feet high, with a splendid tawny moustache and whiskers, smiling blue eyes, and the most endearing manners.

Mr. Dunne, however, would not ratify the engagement until he had made some inquiries about this paragon. He called at the Russian Embassy for the purpose, and there ascertained that the Prince was all he represented himself to

be, a genuine Prince, an owner of vast estates in the province of Cherson, a Court Councillor of his Imperial Majesty, and a most respectable character altogether. Not satisfied yet, the prudent tailor stepped into the office of his friend Tompkinson, the dressing-case maker, of Ludgate Hill, who dealt largely with Russia for leather, and got him to send a telegram to his agents at Moscow and Kief. Answers were wired back on the following day to the effect that the Wiskoffs were a great family, and that Prince Paul's landed estates would cover half an English county. "I suppose they're all swamp, though," mused Mr. Richard Dunne: nevertheless he had the sense to see that Prince Paul would make a most eligible son-in-law; it mattered little that his estates were worthless, so long as his title and character were not open to question. Accordingly, the Prince was invited to spend a fortnight at Pottington Park, and there the engagement between himself and Mina becoming an accomplished fact, a notice of it was sent to the newspapers as above mentioned.

Now the truth is, Prince Paul's estates were not at all composed of swamp, but of very rich corn land, which would have yielded a royal income had it been possible to convey the wheat to Odessa at remunerative prices. Railways being few, all the carrying had to be done by carts; and the crops were generally sold two or three years in advance to Jews, who, buying them as a speculation which they declared to be very risky, seeing that the autumn rains often destroyed half their merchandise on its transit over the

steppes, paid for them only a tenth of what they were worth. Had Prince Paul been a tractable young man, living half the year on his estates and managing them himself, he need not, of course, have accepted such bad bargains; but he was a very extravagant nobleman, who could not bear to dwell in his own country, but was for ever wanting cash to spend in Paris, London, Nice, and German spas. His steward had to find him money, no matter where or how; and the consequence was that this steward robbed him merrily. Prince Paul never received a draft from Russia without some complicated financial operation which put double the value of the draft into the steward's pocket, and this pleasant system had now been carried on for years. At the time when he proposed to Mina he owed money everywhere, and had just got a letter from his steward to say that money was no longer to be had at any price, owing to the badness of the times and the fearful rapacity of the Hebrew race.

The Prince would have done wisely to take his intended father-in-law into his confidence, for the business abilities of that shrewd man who conducted the big establishment in Cheapside might have assisted him out of his difficulties. After all, the estates only needed proper management under an honest agent, and Mr. Dunne would very soon have contrived both to get an honest agent and to tie him down to such a strict system of financing as would have made robbery impossible. Unfortunately, Prince Wiskoff was like many other Russians, extremely vain, and an incorrigible liar. Wherever he went, in whatever company he

might happen to be, he was bound to shine and make himself out to be a great man. He vapoured off his brag in unlimited quantities, and with such a tone of truthfulness that everybody believed him—at least outside his own country.

Russians are not accustomed to accept one another's words at par. They discount them at something like seventy-five per cent. ; but Englishmen, being unaware that they ought to do the same, gave our romancing friend credit to the full for every word he spoke. Thus the Prince, knowing something about the snobbery of Britons, boasted a good deal of his position as Court Councillor. Any Russian could have told Mr. Richard Dunne that this purely honorary rank only classes a man in the fifth degree of the Schinn, or official hierarchy, and gives him a much less high social status than a mere justiceship of the peace in England. But Prince Wiskoff gave it to be understood that he was even higher than an English privy-councillor, in that he was often summoned to Court to advise his Sovereign on matters of the utmost secrecy and importance. He had two or three decorations which looked mighty well with his dress clothes, and lent him quite a diplomatic air when he sat with Mr. Dunne over walnuts and wine, conversing about the abstrusest problems in politics. At such times he confounded Mr. Dunne by the brilliancy of his views and the extent of his information, and the tailor, hearing him talk so well, forgot to notice that he drank a great deal of claret.

The Prince never got drunk, though somehow it might be

said of him that he was always tipsy in company—tipsy with his own words, with the exuberance of his vanity, with the pleasure he took in making himself agreeable. He was, in truth, the most delightful of men, and poor little Mina soon loved him to desperation. Her love could only be increased by the fact that the Prince's disinterested attentions—as they now seemed—raised her to a very lofty position in the estimation of all her relations and acquaintances. Since the Prince took so much pains to impress upon the Dunnes that he was a millionaire, it was evident that he had wooed Mina for love, not for money; and this was a sweetly intoxicating thought to the girl. Even Mr. Dunne began to eye his eldest daughter (he had two) with a kind of wondering respect. She was certainly a nice girl, a pretty girl, and a good girl, too, but it was rather surprising that she should have produced such an impression upon a Prince, who, by all appearances, might have had any Princess in the world for the asking.

Mr. Dunne often fell into reveries while attending to his business in the City, and vague suspicions of something being wrong somewhere would flit across his mind, but he was always reassured when he talked again with the Prince. Nothing could be more plain and circumstantial than the latter's account of his ways and means, and he was always abundantly supplied with cash. He had rooms at Claridge's; he kept a brougham, a phaeton, and several servants; he had been elected, on the proposal of his Ambassador, honorary member of two crack clubs; and he used to bring

Mina presents of great beauty and value. Common diamonds were of no account in his eyes ; he would only offer selected gems of the very purest water.

"Well, Mina is a lucky girl, that's all I can say," Mr. Dunne often repeated to his wife, and that lady cordially agreed. She, moreover, hinted to her husband that the time had surely come when he might retire from business and erase the name of Dunne for evermore from shop-front, hoardings, and railway carriages. Why should he not assume the name of Pottington, and settle down altogether as a country gentleman, becoming a J.P., and, perhaps, a Member of Parliament? He might end by getting a baronetcy through his son-in-law's influence, and as Sir Richard Dunne-Pottington, Bart., cut quite a new figure in the upper ranks of society. "A man must be ambitious," remarked Mrs. Dunne ; but really her husband required no urging in this direction. He began to feel quite rejuvenated by the dreams in which he indulged of commencing a new career in nobler paths than that of tailoring, and if he continued to attend his place of business daily, it was only that he might go on heaping up money as fast as possible, pending the time when he might arrange to sell his share in the firm to Bagwell and Bagges.

The marriage of Mina and the Prince was to take place in three months. Mina had appointed the wedding day, and the Prince was to go to Russia, just to make arrangements, as he said, and to cause his family mansion in St. Petersburg, and his palace in the Cherson, to be prepared

for his bride's reception. The truth is, he absolutely wanted money for his wedding tour and other expenses, and his steward's last letter had convinced him that he had better go and try to wring it in person either from his tenants or from those rascally Jews. Paul Wiskoff, who had never worried his steward with suspicions so long as the latter had sent him remittances, was beginning to brew some very ugly suspicions now that supplies had stopped. He swore strange oaths to himself in his rooms at Claridge's, vowing to clutch his steward by the throat and shake money out of him somehow. He wrote no letter to Russia to say that he was coming. He meant to swoop down on his estate quite unexpectedly, and to remain there just as long as might be necessary to get a good lump of money, at no matter what cost.

It was highly important to him to raise funds, for if his father-in-law *in posse* were to suspect his impecunious condition it was certain that Mina's money would be strictly settled on herself, whereas, if all went on smoothly, he—Paul Wiskoff—would acquire full control over her £200,000 on his wedding day. As the Prince was an intrepid gambler, who loved *écarté*, *bac*, *nap*, and *roulette* with all his soul, and as, like most gamblers, he had faith in some system which he had invented for winning constantly, provided he had only enough capital to start it with, Mina's prospective dower dazzled him as a magnificent sum, which would assuredly make his fortune for ever. It was worth while telling a good many lies to win such a pot of money, and

the Prince's fibs were, indeed, as securities, which he laid out thoughtfully, expecting a fine rate of interest.

He promised that he would not be absent in Russia for more than six weeks ; but of course his departure was very distressing to poor Mina, who could only be comforted by the assurance that he would write to her by every post, and never, never forget her for an instant. On the day of parting the Prince dined at Pottington Park. He had his stars on as usual, with a grand blue riband across his white waistcoat, and he looked a most heavenly object in the little English girl's sight. Mina had red eyes throughout the dinner ; and it cost her goodness knows what efforts not to sob outright when she met her lover's gaze and felt how gently and kindly he was looking at her.

It behoved him to be a little sad that night ; and he did his duty in that respect, for he was a born actor and a scrupulous observer of proprieties. In a subdued tone and with the most perfect semblance of being thoroughly confidential with his new family he told more stupendous lies than he had ever uttered before. He mentioned that a lead mine had been discovered on his estate, and that he thought of applying for a concession for a new line of rail in order to place his property in communication with the sea. He should probably get a company formed in London to make this line and work it ; and he gave the name of an English duke who, he felt sure, would act as chairman of this company. Perhaps, added he, Mr. Dunne might deem it worth his while to become one of the directors ? Mr.

Dunne was indeed just thinking how much it might help his social schemes to be connected in a great railway undertaking with a noble duke. The Prince broadly hinted that the Russian Government would not fail to reward those who assisted in developing the Russian railway system, and the tailor understood that he might possibly get a star and riband like his son-in-law's to put upon his waistcoat.

"No doubt, Prince, this railway would much enhance the value of your estates?" he said.

"Immensely," answered Prince Wiskoff. "I lose as much corn every year as would be enough to feed five thousand families for a twelvemonth, simply because of the difficulties of transit."

"Five thousand families!" echoed Mrs. Dunne, a good, matronly person with red cap-strings, who had been uttering exclamations of astonishment ever since she first became acquainted with the Prince. His words were to her as a continual discharge of fireworks.

"I might almost say ten thousand families," asseverated the Prince seriously.

"Why, that railway would positively be a humanitarian work," observed the tailor.

"You may well say so," answered the Prince. "I never think of so much bread being wasted without a twinge of heart. I would cheerfully sacrifice the increase of fortune which I may expect from the undertaking for the sake of the good that it will do to others."

"Well, there is no reason why you should sacrifice any-

thing," remarked the practical tailor. "If you can do good to yourself by feeding others, your profits are well-earned, I say."

Mina Dunne could not help thinking that her father spoke much less nobly than Prince Paul. Money seemed always to be so far from the latter's thoughts; he never mixed up mercenary calculations with anything he said. You could see that he had all his life enjoyed unlimited command of money, and had always been doing good with it. He was every inch a gentleman.

After dinner the lovers were left alone for half-an-hour, that they might regale each other with those delightful nothings which lovers are wont to exchange. The Prince had never been so ardent in his protestations of love. He talked of the happiness which he would make his darling enjoy till his delicious words floated her away enraptured into dreamland. When they parted he took her to his arms and she clung to him, feeling that it was most dreadful to lose him even for a few weeks, and that she would know no peace until he returned.

It was ten o'clock and his phaeton stood at the door, a most gorgeous equipage, with two grooms in claret-coloured liveries with cockades, and coronets on all their buttons. Every panel of the vehicle, every bit of plating on the harness, bore escutcheons, and the two flashing lamps were surmounted with silver gilt coronets. Prince Wiskoff liked all the world to know that he was a prince, and, really, there was no mistaking that fact when you saw his carriage.

It used to draw a crowd round the door of Claridge's every time it stood there.

The whole Dunne family assembled under the portico to see the Prince depart; and just as he was about to step into the phaeton he hurried back, hat in hand, to give Mina one more kiss *coram populo*. It was prettily and chivalrously done, and drew tears to honest Mrs. Dunne's eyes.

"What a good man he is," she whispered to her husband.

"A fine fellow," echoed the tailor, in the tone of a connoisseur. "Egad, what a king he would make! He seems just born for the part; and everything he does is stylish."

The Prince was at the moment vanishing in the most stylish way down the avenue at Pottington Park, his elbows squared to the level of his eyes and his pair of chestnuts prancing like mad. All the way to London he drove in this stylish fashion, as if he were speeding a Roman chariot in a race; and policemen, cabmen, street boys and other small fry wondered much as they saw him go.

II.

A FORTNIGHT after this, one of the sorriest, crankiest of Russian posting sledges was jolting and bounding along over a plain of frozen snow towards a big house, which looked grand and imposing in the gathering twilight. Prince Wiskoff's palace had been begun on a vast scale by his grandfather, but it had never been finished. Designed on the plan of some château which the Prince had admired

in France, it cut a splendid figure until you came close to it, and saw that its central pavilion and one of its wings had never been inhabited. There were boards in the windows instead of glass, and even in the wing that was occasionally inhabited many of the panes were bunched up with straw. So it is with many things Russian, which bear grand names, but must not be looked at too closely.

The only occupants of the posting sledge, a thing not much roomier than a wheelbarrow, were Prince Paul Wiskoff, who sat wrapped in furs and swearing on the hind seat; and the "istvostchik," or coachman, who from the box plied his whip on the backs of the three yoke-necked Gallows who formed his team and urged them in every term of malediction and endearment, abruptly alternated, to go faster. They were going as fast as they could; but Prince Paul was in an execrable humour from feeling cold in spite of his furs; so he swore abundantly at the coachman, who passed on the curses to his galloping horses. The gates of the front yard were reached, or rather the stone pillars where it had been projected to hang gates, and the sledge dashed through. A few gaunt pigs were moving about the yard, grunting and looking for offal; and when the sledge drew up with a great clatter at the door, a peasant in a long sheepskin coat, who saw the Prince alight, uttered a cry of amazement, and dropped at once on his knees in the mud.

This peasant was the "dvornik," or porter. He had once been a serf, and all his forefathers had been serfs on the Wiskoff estates for time out of mind.

"Little Father, your blessing," he muttered, bending his head with its crop of matted hair and long beard.

"St. Isaac be good to you, Ivan Ivanovitch," answered the Prince, in a tone that sounded more like a curse than a blessing; and he strode into a large, frowsy room on the ground floor. It was the only room in the palace that was tenanted just then. The dvornik dwelt in it with his wife and six children. A large stove, that occupied a space of about twelve feet at the further end, kept up a baking atmosphere in the place.

The dvornik's wife, a Kalmuck-faced woman, with a flat nose and sore eye-rims—a booted woman with a garment like her husband's, and with nothing about her to indicate her sex—went through exactly the same posturing as Ivan Ivanovitch on beholding her master. Turning from a pot, where she was cooking some rancid cabbage, she plumped on her knees and crooned:

"Your blessing, Little Father."

"You have it, Olga Stephanevna," said the Prince, marching up to the stove; "but now bring me a glass of 'vodki,' and send for that rascal, Paul Petrovitch Varkoff."

"Shall I take off your boots, Little Father?" asked the porter's wife, all trembling.

"No; Varkoff shall take them off."

"The steward?" echoed the dvornik, who, like his wife, could not conceal his emotion and terror.

"Yes, the steward; my servant, my dog, who shall be



"Little Father, your blessing," he muttered, bending his head with its crop of matted hair and long beard.

slave or dog of mine no longer. Go and fetch him," cried the Prince, and you, Olga, be quick with the vodki."

It was no small draught of the corn-spirit which Olga poured out for the Prince, but he drained it off in two mouthfuls. The Russian climate allows of taking stimulants in these large quantities, and Prince Paul, in his own country, followed the national custom of drinking to excess. He held out his glass for a second dram. Mina Dunne would not have recognised her lover in the red-faced, hard-drinking, foul-mouthed, demi-savage who stood near the stove snarling at every one who approached him. There were no graces of manner and speech about the Prince now. He roughly told Olga's children to begone when they came near to stare at him with their fingers in their mouths. He was firing off volleys of bad language at large, and snarled louder than ever when he had taken his second joram of whiskey. The steward was a long time coming. Evidently that official had received a shock at the news of his master's arrival, and was considering within himself what he should say to sweeten an interview which he had good reasons for dreading. As his house stood quite close to the palace, there was no plausible excuse for his delay, and the Prince soon talked of going to fetch him by the ears.

He came at last. There was a scraping of feet outside, and a short, fat man, with round shaven cheeks and a military moustache, walked in, making the most obsequious bows on the threshold. His name was Peter Kaufmann, and he was of German origin. The Russians are not good business men,

and all the snug posts in the country where money is to be made or filched are generally filled by refugee Germans or their descendants. Peter Kaufmann's features conveyed a first impression of good-humoured bluffness; but a more attentive scrutiny revealed cunning in his eyes. He was comfortably dressed; his "touloupa," or sheepskin coat, being clean; his blue silk sash new; and his furred bonnet of the richest silver fox-skin. Kaufmann's attitude, however, was that of the most cringing menial. Having made a few steps, he stood in the middle of the room, ducking his head and afraid to advance.

The Prince had plumped down on a bench and extended one leg. "Take off my boots!" he roared.

The steward was down on his knees in an instant, drawing off the tall outer boots which reached to the Prince's thighs. When he had discharged this duty, without a word the Prince gave him a vicious kick in the chest, which sent him right on his back, sprawling. The dvornik's children set up a howl of fright, for they had never seen the distinguished man, who bullied their father and mother, in this undignified posture; and instinct, perhaps, told them that no good would accrue to them from having been witnesses of this degradation.

"You accursed rascal!" bawled the Prince, as the steward struggled meekly to his feet. "I've come all this way because you've robbed me. By Beelzebub, your godfather, you and I are going to settle accounts to-night!"

"Your High Nobility has only the most humble servant



in me," said the steward, without a trace of resentment on his features. "If I had known you were coming, I should have made fitting preparations to receive you."

"You would have prepared to trick and deceive me, you scoundrel; whereas, now I have taken you by surprise, I shall find out a good deal which you will not have had time to conceal," shouted the Prince. "You shall be made to disgorge; be sure of that."

"All I have is your High Nobility's," replied the steward with abject servility.

"Yes, it is; and I'll treat it as mine," was the brutal rejoinder. "By the God above us, Peter Paulovitch, if you don't disgorge I won't be at the trouble of sending you to prison; I'll flog you to death with my own hands, there in the yard, in the sight of all my mujiks."

Notwithstanding this menace, the Prince calmed down presently, when he found that his steward would not answer him. Kaufmann was like rock; there was no pleasure in striking him, for blows left no impression. Besides, the Prince was beginning to wonder what he should do with his evening. The room in which he sat reeked of stench, and yet the dvornik informed him that there was something wrong with the flues in his High Nobility's apartments, so that it would be impossible to warm them properly with the stoves until the village smith had seen to them. As to fare, Olga Stephanevna had nothing to offer but some of that rancid "tchi," or cabbage soup, with maybe a piece of boiled bacon, stringy as canvas, and salted enough to carry off the roof of one's mouth. The Prince's anger changed to sulks when he took in the prospect open to him for his evening's amusement; but it was then that Kaufmann had his opportunity of commencing to reingratiate himself.

Kaufmann owned the only comfortable house in the district. He was known to live well, and had lately married a vivacious young Frenchwoman, daughter of a man-cook at Odessa.

"If your High Nobility will honour my humble dwelling, you will confer a lasting favour," he said with a suppliant air.

"Bring me another glass of vodka," said the Prince to Olga Stephanevna by way of answer; but when he had drunk off the liquor, he drew on his own furred boots again without assistance, put on his cloak, and sulkily intimated that he would accompany the steward.

The two walked out together, but not a word passed between them. The Prince strode a little ahead of Kaufmann, who felt rather disposed to widen the distance between them than to lessen it. The steward was reflecting as he went that he must make the Prince very comfortable; ply him with champagne, and, having got him tipsy, talk him over. But he did not disguise from himself that a man who had travelled from London to Russia would not be put off from the business which had impelled him on his journey by being made drunk. The Prince must have some money. Kaufmann, who had robbed him to a very large extent, hoped that he might be able to wipe out all old scores by a payment of ten thousand roubles.

In ten minutes they reached a square-built house of no outward pretension, but admirably ordered for comfort. It was surrounded by a small but thickly-planted fir wood, which guarded it against the fierce winds that blew over the Steppe; whilst inside, double windows, warm red carpet, padded doors, and stoves kept up a soft, even temperature in every room. The Prince gave a sigh of enjoyment as he

walked into the vestibule, where Madame Kaufmann received him. That lady had had an hour to make her preparations, for it had been agreed between her and her husband, when the latter was summoned away by the dvornik, that the Prince should be brought back as a guest, if possible. Madame Kaufmann was a pretty woman, with keen black eyes, and having put on her showiest black velvet dinner-dress (one bought at Odessa, and worn there only as a rule), she looked very smart and winsome. She threw open the dining-room door, and there the Prince beheld a well-spread table, and all the preparations for a good dinner, including several bottles of champagne in ice-pails. The sight, gladdening as it was, did not restore the Prince to good humour. He answered Madame Kaufmann's hospitable welcome as coldly as he could, and seemed displeased at noticing that covers had been laid for three. Was his thieving steward going to have the impudence to sit down to table with him?

It was certainly a bold measure, but Madame Kaufmann had the spirit of a Frenchwoman, and knew the arts by which men can be mollified. Her shrinking husband would have been afraid to sit down with the Prince uninvited, but Madame had plainly told him that in her own house she meant to be mistress, and that if anybody sat down to her table it should be as a guest, not as a bully. So, in the upshot, the Prince, the steward, and his wife all dined together.

The dinner was good, so was the champagne, and the

Prince drank as much as his hosts wished. He was also amiable with Madame Kaufmann, but he was not thrown off his guard. There is nothing like impecuniousness to keep a man vigilant.

"I dare say your husband tells you all his affairs, Madame Kaufmann," remarked the Prince bluntly towards the close of the meal. "I have to-day given him a promise which you must advise him to mind. I have come all the way from England for money, and money I must have."

"If I had known your High Nobility was so hard pressed——" began the steward.

"You did know it," replied the Prince with a scowl, "and you wrote to me saying that none was to be had."

"I meant that the estates were so heavily encumbered, your High Nobility; but I would gladly have let you have some money out of my own little store."

"My husband was just about to send you ten thousand roubles," remarked Madame Kaufmann, who had been making heavy play with her eyes on the Prince in hopes of reaching his heart. She smiled bewitchingly as she said this; but it was all of no use.

"Ten thousand roubles would do me no good," replied the Prince brusquely. "I am going to be married. I must have a hundred thousand."

The steward and his wife exchanged glances. Kaufmann had changed colour, but he quickly rallied.

"You shall have them, sir," he said, speaking in French.

"When?"

"As soon as I can bring old Moses Iscariotivich here—probably in a week."

"You told me that old heathen was no longer good for a kopeck."

"Yes, but this is a special case—your High Nobility is going to be married. You must have money. Your crops for the next three years are sold, but I would recommend you to sell them for five years afterwards."

"I'll sell the crops for twenty years if I can only find a buyer," answered the Prince. "My position is just this: I shall have two hundred thousand English pounds on my wedding day if I can show that I have some money of my own beforehand."

"Is your *fiancée* English?" asked Madame Kaufmann, seeing that the hope of getting money had at last rendered the Prince more tractable.

"Yes, she is English."

"And very pretty, I am sure? I need not ask that, for your High Nobility has such admirable taste."

"Every girl is pretty who has eighteen hundred thousand roubles as her portion," declared the Prince in a tone that would have made poor Mina shudder if she had heard it. "But now to business, Kaufmann. When shall you see old Moses?"

"I'll start for Odessa to-morrow morning and bring him back with me, sir."

"And you shall remain here as my guest while my husband is gone, Prince," said Madame Kaufmann, with a

glance and smile which now were irresistible. "It will be better for you than living alone in the Palace, where you would be so dull."

The evening ended much more pleasantly than it had begun. The Prince, being reassured about his money, got drunk without compunction, and readily hearkened to all Kaufmann's explanations, proving that he was the most honest of stewards, and had rather impoverished himself than gained money in the service of his master. At last the Prince sunk back snoring in his chair, and was then carried off to rest. Beds are scarce commodities in Russian houses, and pure-bred Russians like to sleep on the carpets, wrapped up in their furs, so it was not necessary to undress Prince Paul. He was simply rolled up in his cloak and laid in the corner of an upper room, and there his hosts left him to snore till morning.

Kaufmann started for Odessa before the Prince had awoke from his sleep, and it was the fair madame who did the honours to her guest when he came down for mid-day breakfast. Kaufmann remained absent a week, and that time was spent not unpleasantly by the Prince with his gay hostess. They grew so intimate, in fact, that the peasants on the estate, who had heard how the hated steward had been made to pull off the Prince's boots, marvelled at this sudden appeasement of his High Nobility's wrath, and spoke with some grim humour to one another about the capriciousness of princes. It was quite evident that the steward had been fully restored to favour, for during his absence the

Prince attended to no business. It was Madame Kaufmann who gave orders about everything, and rated the tenants and labourers just as soundly as her husband was wont to do.

It was on the seventh day after his departure that Kaufmann returned in the evening at about dinner time, bringing with him old Moses Iscariotivich. This worthy was one of the meagrest, dirtiest, most unsightly of all the Jews who dwelt in Odessa, and that is saying something. Fatigued by his journey, unwashed, shivering from cold, and attired in the shabbiest of greasy sheepskins, he looked the last man in the world out of whom anybody could get money; yet he was known to be a man of very large wealth, an usurer execrated by the peasantry, and scarcely less so by their masters the landowners. Tired and cold as he was, the Jew's wits were all alive when he was ushered into the Prince's presence, and the two came to business at once, even before the Jew had emptied the glass of French brandy which Madame Kaufmann produced in his honour, for the Prince was very impatient about his money.

"Moses Iscariotivich," he said, with the usual *hauteur* of Russians addressing members of the hated Jewish race, "my steward has told you what I want."

"Your High Nobility wants to sell twenty years' crops," croaked the Jew, in a voice that sounded like the whistling of wind through a keyhole.

"Yes, I do; will you buy them?"

"With pleasure, sir, with pleasure; money down."

The Prince could hardly believe his ears. "What will you give for them, old Moses? Remember, I'm not trifling."

"The old terms, sir; ten thousand roubles a year—that makes two hundred thousand roubles in all."

"Silver roubles?"

"No, sir; paper roubles. Times are so hard, your High Nobility, I really cannot."

"Cursed old scamp; nobody ever caught you asleep over a bargain," muttered the Prince. "Never mind; bring me pen and ink, Kaufmann. Have you prepared the deed, old Moses?"

"It's all prepared, your High Nobility," snivelled the Jew, drawing a paper from a greasy portfolio. "Put your signature there, sir—there; and here again. That will do."

The Prince's excitement was immense. When he had dashed off his signature he stood up with sparkling eyes, holding out his hand for the cheque which he expected the Jew to give. Two hundred thousand paper roubles (£25,000) was a sum which far transcended his highest expectations. He should be able to start for England at once—that very night; even if his marriage failed through any cause, he would have ample funds in hand to start afresh in life with.

The Jew was fumbling with a bundle of papers. He produced a parcel closed with a number of red seals, and tendered them to the Prince, who broke the seals mechanically, and with evident astonishment. But his astonish-

ment turned to stupefaction and then to frenzy when his eyes fell upon the contents of the parcel. They were a bundle of his own dishonoured acceptances, unpaid bills, &c., from Paris and London. Thanks to the fraternity which exists among Jews, Moses had been able to get these into his possession. He had probably bought them as a speculation.

But the man must have been half mad to present them to the Prince in this way, at a time when the Prince himself was almost frantic for want of money. With a countenance that was livid, and with foam at his mouth, the Prince turned upon Kaufmann.

"Did you know of this trick that was to be played me?" he hissed.

"Great God! no, sir!" answered the steward, dumb-founded with amazement.

"Then, by the God above us! Moses, hand me back that agreement which I signed."

The Jew took a pinch of snuff. "The bargain is made, your High Nobility; I have paid you with your own signatures; good money, I'm sure. So help me, God!"

"Take care, Moses," bawled the affrighted steward, for the Prince was striding towards the Jew with both fists clenched.

"Mercy!" yelled the Jew; but the Prince had got him by the throat, and, ramming him against the wall, held him fast. The shrieks of Madame Kaufmann, the entreaties of the steward, the Jew's own horrid gurglings could not stop

him. Prince Paul Wiskoff did not release his hold of Moses Iscariotivich till he strangled him.



Then he turned to Kaufmann with a demoniacal glare. "Now sign me a draft for twenty thousand roubles, man, and I'll be off to England. As for that carrion, you'll have

it carried out on to the Steppe. The wolves will have eaten him before morning."

"You shall be obeyed, sir," answered the trembling steward.

* * * * *

Prince Wiskoff returned to England the same night, and his marriage will soon take place. The commonly given version of the Jew's death was that he had lost his way in trying to reach a posting-station on foot to save the expense of a guide. But the wolves had picked his bones clean, and his heirs made no fuss about the matter.



THE HEADSMAN OF FRIESPIEL.


IN the little Duchy of Friespiel used to live a worthy man called Schnipper, who regularly every day of his life went to spend his evenings at the Gross-Herzog's Brauerei, and played games of chess with Professor Bunks. There was nothing remarkable in Schnipper's appearance. He used to wear a snuff-coloured coat, low shoes with strings to them, a white neckcloth rolled thrice round his neck, and spectacles with silver rims. He might have been about fifty at the age when we introduce him; but he appeared a little older, because of the sad, bashful expression that was stamped on his features. He looked like a man in easy circumstances, and was so; yet no man save Professor Bunks seemed to court his society, while Schnipper himself never made advances with a view to extending the sphere of his acquaintanceship. He was polite to everybody, and all men spoke deferentially to him and of him, but cordiality was absent from their relations with this man. Why? Because Schnipper was the son, grandson and great-grandson of departed executioners, and he himself nominally held the post of Headsman to the Duchy of Friespiel, though he had never put a soul in that Duchy to death, nor was likely to.

The Friespielers were good people, and they might easily have forgotten Schnipper's gloomy profession had the latter allowed them to do so. Capital punishment had long been abolished in the Duchy *de facto*, if not in law. It was more than fifty years since an execution had taken place there; and Schnipper had succeeded to his present unsought-for post by inheritance, as his father and grandfather had done before him, without having ever been able to obtain leave from the Government to give in his resignation. He had petitioned twice to procure the favour of a dismissal, but the Aulic Councillors who formed the Duke's cabinet had expressed their regret that they could not give effect to his wishes, seeing that it was necessary the Duchy should possess a titular Headsman, even though the services of such an official might never be required. So Schnipper lived rent free in a house which the State assigned to him, and every year, on Good Friday, he received two hundred thalers, with as much scarlet cloth as would have sufficed to make him a suit of clothes, such having been the customary wages of the Headsman in old times. The annual remittance of this money and this cloth used profoundly to humiliate Schnipper, whose hand would tremble as he signed the receipt in the Treasury books. The money he invariably gave to the hospitals; the cloth he used to cause to be dyed in black, and then he made a present of it to poor people who were in mourning.

There was so much unostentatious benevolence in these charities that persons who heard of them felt a genuine

respect for Schnipper ; but, on the other hand, his morbid self-consciousness made them afraid to try and seek to enter his intimacy. He did not exactly wear a hangdog expression, but he looked like a man who is afraid of being insulted. It was only when playing at chess with Bunks that he seemed to be at ease, and occasionally relaxed into great merriment. Bunks was the most peaceful soul alive. A Professor of History at the Ducal College, who worked all day at teaching the young idea how to sift the true from the false in legends of the past, he loved chess as an evening's recreation, and was fond of Schnipper, who was indefatigable in humouring his passion for this game. He liked him on other grounds also, for Schnipper was a student, too, in his tranquil way, and spent many of the long hours of the day when he was alone in reading the old chronicles wherewith his library was plentifully stocked.

Sometimes Bunks came to dine with him on Sunday, and then for him—but for him alone—Schnipper would open a cupboard which contained mementoes of his terrible ancestors. There were registers of executions extending over three centuries ; depositions taken from the mouths of State prisoners subjected to torture ; dying confessions signed by the faltering fingers of criminals who were being led to the gibbet or the stake ; and side by side with these a very museum of articles which had belonged to slaughtered convicts, and had become the executioner's perquisites—religious amulets, gold rings, empty purses, and bundles of letters—some of them love epistles—written in ink which had long



turned yellow. Into these relics Professor Bunks was never tired of prying with all an historical searcher's curiosity, but when he asked Schnipper to show him some of the instruments which had been used of yore for killing and maiming the victims of judicial vengeance, the Headsman always shuddered, and refused bluntly. He kept the dreadful implements of his craft locked up in a cellar into which he had only penetrated once in his life—on the day when, after his father's death, he had been compelled to furnish the Government with an inventory of the stock that had been left him. Since that occasion he had never even opened the cellar door.

Schnipper, as we have said, was about fifty, and he had been enjoying the friendship of Bunks rather more than fifteen years, when one evening that learned man arrived at the Gross-Herzog Brauerei with a lanky youth of twenty-two, whom he introduced as his son Wolfgang. Young Bunks had been undergoing education at Bonn, and had now returned to practise as a doctor in the city where his father lived. Schnipper had often seen him before when Wolfgang was a boy; but they had not met for five years, and now the Headsman found the lad strangely altered. There was a something in his eyes which made Schnipper uneasy. It was an expression at once moody and keen; when his gaze rested on anything, it seemed at first to pierce the thing or person through; then it gradually lost its intensity, like a lantern growing dim, till it became evident that the lad's thoughts were wandering far away in fields of abstruse speculation. Wolfgang had imbibed extreme political views

at the University. This Professor Bunks hastened to communicate to his friend Schnipper, adding regretfully that he and the youth differed, for Wolfgang was a Caesarist, an advocate of government by the sword, and a mystic religionist. However, the young doctor did not presume to air his opinions before his elders. He was of a taciturn disposition, tranquil and polite in his manner; and it was not until he had attended at the Brauerei for weeks, and watched innumerable games of chess between his father and the Headsman, that he unbent towards the latter, and got to talk familiarly with him.

Meanwhile Schnipper had gradually become drawn towards Wolfgang by a fascination which he could not explain. The Professor's son had a scholarly but not handsome head, with deep-set eyes, a pale complexion, a long thin neck, and hair which fell to his shoulders. At this neck and this hair Schnipper would sometimes gaze as if he could not take his eyes off him, and whenever he did so he felt overpowered with a curious melancholy. He liked the lad's company, and yet he dreaded it. When he sat with Wolfgang at the Brauerei he resolved that he would try not to see him again; but when he was absent from the young man he longed for the hour when they should once more come together. Wolfgang's father fell ill about three months after the latter's return home, and the lad remained absent ten days from the Brauerei, being in constant attendance at the sick man's bedside. During this time Schnipper was as miserable as if he had lost a relative. He used to go three times a day to ask

news of the Professor, but the object of his visits was really to see Wolfgang, though he was hardly conscious of this fact himself, and would have denied it had his own conscience taxed him with it.

At length old Bunks became convalescent, and Wolfgang returned to the Brauerei, but alone. For the next few weeks it was he who played chess with the Headsman; but he was not a good player, for his thoughts were ever brooding on far-away subjects, and he was always glad when the time came to push away the board, and to talk. Knowing Schnipper to be an ardent Liberal and humanitarian—a man who loathed the very name of bloodshed—he never spoke about politics with him, but was very fond of broaching problems in science, and these generally led him to discuss the greatest one of all, as to the immortality of the soul. Schnipper was too much of a freethinker to believe that he had anything more in the way of a soul than a bundle of nerves subject to diastaltic and other actions; but he used to listen with enraptured attention whilst Wolfgang developed his reasons for thinking that the present life is only one of the shortest phases of the soul's long career through time.

One day Schnipper took home Wolfgang to supper, and after that the young doctor frequently went to the house of his friend. Like his father, he was in due time (though not until he had himself requested it) shown the Headsman's cabinet of records, and like his father he asked in vain to see the implements of execution. To Schnipper's annoyance, and even anger, Wolfgang did not rest content with one refusal,

but returned to this last subject again and again. One night he said abruptly to the Headsman—

“It seems to me, Herr Schnipper, that you are ashamed of your profession. I don’t know why you should be. At this moment the world is teeming with Socialists, and I should regard that man as a public benefactor who executed a few score of them.”

“There was blood enough spilt in the old time, and what did it profit?” asked the Headsman mournfully.

“It often did more good than you may fancy,” replied Wolfgang. “There were executions which altered the world’s fate for the better.”

“I doubt it,” answered Schnipper. “Besides, the whole subject displeases me. You must talk of something else when you are with me.”

“I did not mean to offend you,” said Wolfgang gently, and there the subject dropped. This was the last time the young doctor importuned the Headsman to lend him the key of the dread cellar downstairs.

A few days later, however, there arose suddenly a great stir in Friespiel. Socialists were, as Wolfgang had remarked, flourishing all over the country, and one day a fanatic among them sought to kill the Duke. He was tried, and condemned to a long imprisonment; but somehow this comparatively mild sentence appeared harsh to a number of foolish and disorderly people in the Duchy, who pretended that the prisoner’s guilt had not been satisfactorily established; so an agitation was started for his release, and a demagogue

called Grossmund greatly distinguished himself in bawling seditious jargon. It so happened that this Grossmund was a man whom Wolfgang Bunks detested ; and one day the pair, meeting at a local club, had high words. The same night Grossmund was found murdered in a dark street near his house ; and the next day it was known all over the city that Wolfgang had surrendered himself as the author of the crime.

“He provoked me, and lifted his hand to strike me. I seized him by the throat and strangled him like a dog.”

Such was the prisoner's account of the case.

He was put on his trial immediately, and sentenced to death. Usually sentences of this sort were followed immediately by a reprieve under the Duke's sign manual ; but Grossmund had been a popular favourite, and his death gave rise to a loud clamour of the rabble for vengeance. Many said that it was the Duke himself who had instigated the murder, and under the circumstances the Aulic Councillors were compelled to advise his Serene Highness that to show mercy would be dangerous. The Duke felt deeply for Wolfgang Bunks ; but politics have dire necessities, and so the warrant for the young man's death was signed, and forwarded to the Headsman with formalities which had become virtually obsolete from long disuse.

To say that Schnipper was staggered or surprised would not be truth. Since the horrible hour when he had learned Wolfgang's crime he had come to understand what feeling it was that had drawn him towards this young man with such

mysterious attraction. He recognised now that he had been moved by a presentiment; and from the moment when Wolfgang was arraigned before his judges Schnipper never doubted for a moment what his fate would be. This, however, did not prevent the Headsman from arraying himself all in black when he received the warrant, nor from going to seek audience of one of the Aulic Councillors, to whom he announced his unalterable intention of resigning.

"This young man is my friend," he faltered in a broken voice. "You cannot expect me to kill him."

"I am sorry for you," replied the Aulic Councillor, with a shrug, "but we cannot relieve you of your duties."

"I *must* be relieved of them," was Schnipper's agitated answer.

"No; and I must tell you that if you are a man of honour—for you wish to pass as such, I suppose. . . ."

"I have been an honest man all my days, sir," replied Schnipper, drawing himself up. "This is my consolation for having borne such an execrable title."

"Well, but you have drawn the pay of this title, lived in a house rent free, and so forth; if now you withdraw from your duties the first time they are imposed upon you, we shall send you to prison."

The argument was prolonged, but all to no purpose, for the Aulic Councillor would not be moved. In the end he finished by moving Schnipper, and the latter went home, feeling that his honour—strange word in such a case!—compelled him to do that against which his whole being

revolted. He took a key from one of the innermost recesses of his desk, and went down with a lantern in his hand to open the door of his cellar where the implements of his craft were kept. A last hope possessed him that these might be out of order, so that the execution might fail at the last moment, and be postponed of necessity, and so lead to Wolfgang's reprieve. But the cellar proved to be dry as a linen-room; and all the grim cutlery left by Schnipper's father was in capital working condition. The knife of the guillotine in its shagreen case had not a speck of rust on it.

* * * * *

Wolfgang was beheaded. On the day when this deed of blood was consummated Schnipper shut himself up in his house, and did not leave it for weeks. He perhaps thought at first that he should never leave it again; but Time is a great healer, and so it came to pass that one evening the Headsman once more bent his steps to a Brauerei, but not to the one which he used to frequent of yore, and where, as he feared, he might meet poor old Bunks. His entrance into this new Brauerei, however, was the signal for a general cessation of talk. All the drinkers present sat silent, and stared at the Headsman with looks of fear and aversion. Schnipper noticed this, and, having swallowed his beer, hurried out shamefaced, feeling like a leper cut off from all communion with men.

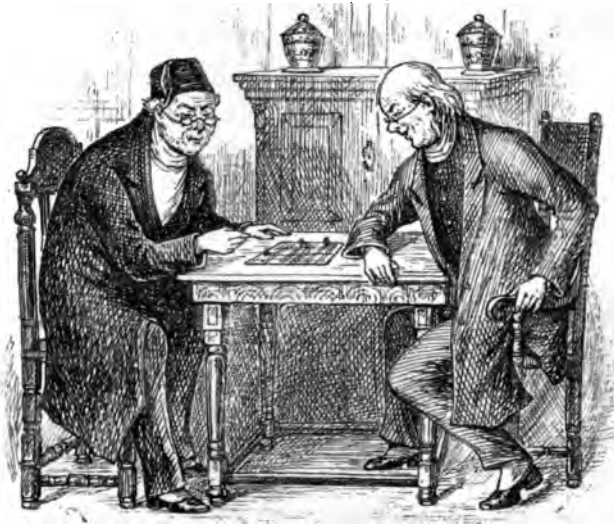
But the next evening, as he sat at home, there was a ring at his door. He went himself to open it, and recoiled at the

sight he witnessed; it was old Bunks with a chessboard under his arm.

"They told me you had gone to the Brauerei again, so I suppose you are ready to play chess," faltered the old man in the voice of one near his dotage. "My boy—Wolfgang, you know—told me the last time I saw him that I was to remain friends with you, so if—if you don't mind, we'll begin our games again."

There was a piteous note of entreaty in the old man's voice as he said this; and he fumbled his chessboard with an air of almost imbecile supplication.

"Walk in," said Schnipper softly, and from that day old Bunks and he played chess together as usual.



PRINCE MORELVINE'S EXPIATION.

PRINCE MORELVINE, Civil Governor of O——, enjoyed the distinction of being almost the only high official in his province who had not been molested in some way or threatened by Nihilists. It would have been of little use to threaten him, for he was a man who believed little in words, and could never have been turned out of his path by any warning of danger. If a revolver had been levelled at him he would have reflected that there were at least three chances to one against the assassin's taking a good aim. Why, then, should he have been uneasy at a threat of murder? There are men whose coolness protects them like a breastplate. Prince Morelvine was a man of the world, who had been a soldier, courtier, diplomatist, and *bon vivant*. He had tried life by all its sides: nothing surprised him, and few things angered him.

He did get angry, however, when the Nihilists killed his best friend, General Stourchine, the Military Governor of O——. Stourchine and he had been like brothers; and the General, while bleeding to death from a dastardly stab he had received in the streets in broad daylight, had sent for

Morelvine, and muttered in his ear some inarticulate words which Morelvine took for a request for revenge.

"Go in peace, Stourchine," faltered the Civil Governor, as he kissed his friend. "I'll revenge you."

The dying man shook his head as if to say that was not what he had meant. "Re—resign, and I—leave Russia," he murmured.

"I leave Russia so long as there is work for me to do here?" exclaimed Morelvine, surprised.

But already the film of death was passing over his friend's eyes, and Morelvine could only discern in the wistful moribund glance that was bent upon him an expression of the most yearning, piteous entreaty. The Civil Governor dashed away a tear from the corner of his eye, and plunged his hand nervously into the opening of his tunic. The underlings who saw him do this trembled. Never had they seen Morelvine's face look so implacably wroth and cruel. The gesture which he made in waving his hand over his dead friend's body, as though to bless it, looked like a defiance hurled at all the Nihilists in the empire.

"Morelvine is roused now, and there'll be some blood shed in the land," murmured one of the police officials who was standing by.

The murderer of General Stourchine could not be found, but a proclamation was posted on the walls of O—— in the night, declaring that the "act of justice" had been perpetrated by order of the Revolutionary Committee. This document was signed "Saridja," a name which, like "Mari-

anne" in France, is synonymous in some parts of Russia with conspiracy. When a copy of this paper had been brought to Morelvine he crumpled it in his hand, and sent for the Golovine, or Burgomaster of O——, one Baron Karinow, a man whom he hated, but of whose loyalty there could be no question. Karinow was a churl, a rough-voiced, hard-featured soldier, with the manners of a mujik and the temper of a chained mastiff. He had never been out of Russia, and despised men who had the varnish of Paris on them, like Morelvine. The Civil Governor and he never met without exchanging sharp words, and now Morelvine, who was a bit of a Tartar under his veneer of refinement, was glad of the opportunity to browbeat his enemy.

"Look here, Karinow," said he. "Stourchine was murdered in broad daylight. Somebody must have seen the assassin, so you must find him, or I shall think that you are not fit for your place."

"I am as fit for it as you are for yours," snarled the Golovine. "I consider your finikin ways are largely responsible for the disorders in this province. You have the plenary powers of martial law: why don't you use them?"

"I mean to use them, but the police are under your direction; so I give you the order to set them afield till they have tracked the murderer to his lair."

"I won't work with you at all, but I'll resign at once, unless you give me a promise, Morelvine," said Karinow, with a brutal oath. "You must swear on your head that whomsoever I may catch and prove guilty shall be executed."

.

Your courtiers from St. Petersburg have always friends who beg off the criminal, and that because he happens to be connected with somebody who must not be offended. Now I'll have none of that fooling in this case."

"Take my oath then on my head," exclaimed Morelvine, stretching out his hand, whilst his eyes flashed with fury.

"Good," growled Karinow coarsely. "I don't like you, but I know you'd pay me the forfeit if you blenched; *and I'd take it!*"

"My head you mean?"

"Yes, your head."

Karinow nodded emphatically as he said this, and marched out stamping heavily on the staircase with his big boots. Morelvine, when alone, paced about his room in some agitation. He was irritated at having been suspected of weakness; and yet his mind felt disturbed by the pledge he had just given to Karinow. The art of governing requires so many compromises that it might well be a necessity would arise for sparing some culprit in order that a great end of good for the State or society might be compassed. Such things are happening every day. When, however, Morelvine thought of his dead friend the General, his thoughts took a new direction, and he swore once again to himself that the murderer and his accomplices should have no mercy.

A week passed without bringing any news of the Golovine, and Morelvine could not hear that anybody had been arrested. On the afternoon of the eighth day a policeman brought him a note from Karinow, which contained but this

one line:—"We are on the track; more this evening." The Governor left word to say that he was going to dine at the house of his daughter, the Countess Nariskeff; and at nightfall he set out on foot. It was a bright March evening, and though the spring thaw had not yet set in, it was not too cold. There was a brilliant moon overhead. Morelvine walked quickly; but at the corner of a street he heard footsteps behind him, and a man in a cloak, running past him, suddenly turned and barred his way.

"Prince, 'Saridja' wishes *you* no harm," said this stranger, in hurried tones, "but for your own sake warn the Golovine not to follow up the clue he has got."

"Who are you who speak thus?" exclaimed the Governor, seizing his interlocutor by the arm.

"I am neither your friend nor your enemy," said the man, shaking himself free, "but take my warning. Don't try to find out who Stourchine's murderer is."

The man vanished. Morelvine was tempted to pursue him, raising a hue and cry; but in the streets of O—— at night he could have got no one to help him. The "Saridja" was terrorising the province. Even with a strong guard behind him the Governor could not have made sure of capturing any rebel in the streets. So he continued his walk, and on arriving at his daughter's house gave directions to the porter that if any man called with a message he was to be shown upstairs at once.

Olga Nariskeff was Prince Morelvine's only child. She had been married about a year to the young colonel of a

cavalry regiment—a man whom Morelvine loved like a son. Had it been otherwise, Nariskeff would never have got Olga's hand, for Morelvine was a doting father, and would not have consented that his daughter should marry a man who was not, humanly speaking, perfection. Prince Morelvine was a widower, and since his wife's death, which had happened when Olga was ten years old, he had been both father and mother to his daughter, so that the affectionate relationship between them had grown to be peculiarly tender and intimate. Olga seemed to worship her father, and his every thought was for her happiness. So truly did his heart beat in unison with hers that no shade of sadness or anxiety could pass over her brow without his noticing it. When he entered her drawing-room on this fatal evening, he at once perceived there was something the matter with her.

"Why, what is it, Olga?" he asked; and as he said that he observed she was in travelling dress. "Why, where are you going?"

"Father, Paul and I are in danger," answered the Countess, turning her beautiful eyes with a frightened look from her father's. "We must leave Russia for the present. You will give us passports and an escort to the frontier, won't you?"

"Why, what has happened?" stammered the Governor, seized with an awful apprehension which made him choke. "Have you committed some imprudence?"

"Yes, that's it, father—an imprudence," said the Countess, answering excitedly at random, for she was packing

some things in a travelling-bag as she spoke. "In these times people may get suspected for little. Paul is in danger, that is all I can say, and we need your protection. I will write and explain matters when we are out of Russia."

Even as she spoke there was a knock at the door, and a police official walked in, holding a letter which he handed to the Governor with a salute. Morelvine broke seal and read—

"The murderer of Stourchine is your son-in-law Nariskeff; and the printing-press of the 'Saridja' is in your daughter's house. The pair of them are the leaders of the Nihilist gang in O——. Now do justice.

"KARINOW."

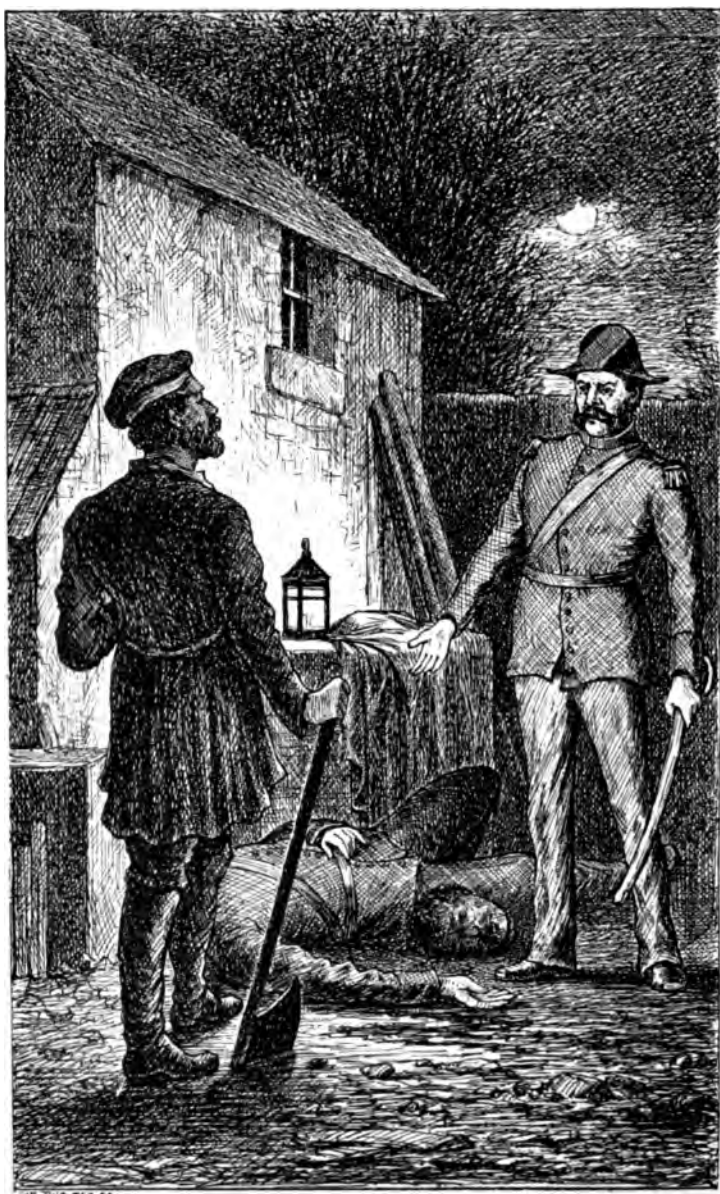
* * * * *

An hour later Morelvine, closely muffled in his cloak, knocked at the door of Karinow's house. The Golovine opened in person, and led the way without a word to a yard at the back of his house, where by the light of a lantern a mujik was chopping wood. Morelvine did not seem surprised to be led here. He threw off his cloak, and looking quietly at Karinow, said—

"My daughter and her husband have gone, so I have come to place myself in your hands."

"I thought as much," replied Karinow, with a grim laugh; "and I think I was right to exact my pledge of you, eh? So the brood of traitors was in your own nest, aha?"

"You could not expect me to surrender my own daughter?" remarked Morelvine with a moan.



"Well done!" said Karinow, quietly; "and now let's bury that traitor's body."

Face p. 409.

"Yet you are the man who twitted me for not doing my duty," cried Karinow, with glaring eyes. "Well, I hate you; I always did, you and the whole lot of men like you, who are the perdition of Russia. You, Morelvine, with your French ideas, are as much a Nihilist as the worst of them. You have scattered folly over the land, and I who love the Czar and my country want blood of you in revenge for Stourchine's death. Do you remember our pledge?"

"I do; I was to give my head," answered Morelvine calmly.

He looked round, saw the mujik with his hatchet and a wood-block beside him. Without a word he walked up to the block, knelt down and laid his neck upon it. The mujik had apparently been instructed beforehand, for he appeared no wise astonished, but fixed his axe and glanced at his master. Karinow, with a devilish look on his face, waved his hand.

There was a flash in the lantern light, a sickening thud, and Morelvine's headless body rolled over in a pool of blood.

"Well done!" said Karinow quietly; "and now let's bury that traitor's body."

So Morelvine was buried in Karinow's wood-yard, and a pile of logs presently composed his funeral monument. The world learnt nothing of what had happened; but when the causes of Count and Countess Nariskeff's flight got to be known, it was supposed that Morelvine had fled too to escape justice.

CHICKBOROUGH'S SCARE.

THE inhabitants of Chickborough are persuaded that they lately received a visit from the Evil One.

A humdrum set of folks, who were accustomed to nothing more eventful than the occasional visit of a travelling circus, they were surprised one morning to see the walls of their town placarded with huge red posters announcing that Ulysses B. Jigger, Professor of Magnetism, from Yale, U.S., would shortly give a *séance* in wizardry at the Town Hall. The placards went on to state that the prices of admission would be 1s. and 2s. 6d., and that these charges must be considered cheap, seeing that Mr. Jigger was going to demonstrate some new and startling secrets which he had snatched from Nature. The present generation has seen so much of new discoveries that the people of Chickborough were quite willing to believe that Mr. Edison's fellow-countryman had something novel to show them; but it was not the zeal in the cause of science—only the desire to kill a winter evening—that brought about two hundred of them to the Town Hall at the time appointed for the fun. Perhaps there would have been four hundred if the prices of admission had

been lower. Chickborough did not esteem that half-crowns and shillings were small sums.

The evening was a raw, cold one, and the Town Hall, which could have held a thousand persons, looked bleak with its scanty audience. The breath of the spectators ascended in little puffs of steam, and a canopy of fog hung over the many empty benches, making the gas burn red. There was no music. The ladies kept their hands in their muffs, shivering, and wondered to see no preparations for wizardry on the platform. There was not even a table—only a Windsor chair. Presently a solemn negro boy entered, and deposited on this chair a fiddle and a bow. No one laughed, for there was something in the lad's manner which deprecated the idea of merriment, and he passed the bow twice over his thumb with thoughtful interest as if he were trying the edge of a sword-blade. An uncomfortable fear began to assail the unmusical part of the audience that the American's scientific discoveries had something to do with this violin, and that they were going to hear a series of fugues evolved by magnetic process. Conjecture was soon set at rest, however, by the appearance of a tall, fair-haired gentleman in evening dress, who, having bowed, said with a pronounced nasal twang, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am Ulysses Jigger."

Mr. Jigger spoke with the slow, distinct articulation peculiar to his countrymen, and his features wore that Yankee scowl which is the outward visible sign of human dignity in a country where 'cuteness holds the first rank among social virtues. Mr. Jigger was not above thirty years

old, and seemed mightily in earnest to prove that America was the cradle of modern science, and he himself one of the most promising offsprings of that cradle. As he talked with smileless fluency, he kept his eyes moving attentively over the faces of the audience, as if trying to detect somebody who might be inclined to scoff at him, but nobody felt such inclination, for all were much interested in the lecturer's discourse. Beginning—or "commencing," as he himself put it—with an allusion to the dark ages of European superstition, U. B. Jigger explained that he had carefully studied the records of legendary, and arrived at the conclusion that there was nothing in the wildest fancies of romance—no exploit of goblin, wizard, or fairy, which could not be imitated by magnetic science.

"For instance," cried he, abruptly, "I suppose none here present will deny that it would be a smart thing to make oneself invisible at will. Wall, see me vanish."

As he said this Mr. Jigger melted into nothing, and before the audience could fairly realise what had happened, they heard his voice from the opposite end of the hall. Turning round, they saw him advance coolly up the gangway which ran down the middle of the room. Everybody was amazed, but the Mayor of Chickborough, a strong-minded character, who was a Chandler in private life, exclaimed—

"Pooh, he has a confederate;" and Mr. Meeks, a local curate, who was an infallible authority amongst all the young ladies of the town, remarked, "Pepper's Ghost, you know. It's just the same thing."

These dubitative utterances must have reached the Yankee's ears, but they did not disconcert him. He nimbly climbed the platform, and, having waved his hands to command silence, announced his second feat.

"I am going to expand myself into a giant, then wrinkle up into a dwarf," said he; and even as he spoke the size of his figure was changed. Slowly but perceptibly, like a balloon being blown, Mr. Jigger grew stouter and taller, and, marvellous to relate, his clothes expanded with him. He towered to ten feet, twenty, thirty, till at the end of a couple of minutes he could increase no more, for his head touched the vault of the Town Hall, just forty-five feet above the level of the platform.

This transformation ecstatised the local tailor, one Sheares, who ejaculated, "My goodness! I wonder who took his measure for that ere pair of trousers."

But a local carpenter was even more excited: "It's I who built that platform," cried he. "What precious good planks they must be to bear such a weight as that!" and he sorrowed at not having charged enough for these planks in his bill.

The rest of the audience sat petrified. "Now, my friends," thundered the Yankee, whose voice sounded aloft like the bass notes of a cathedral organ; "now I'll just lift up Mr. Mayor to the ceiling to show him that I have no confederate.

"Help!" bawled the Mayor, for the lecturer had already stooped, and, with monstrous fingers, clasped him round the waist. The municipal dignitary floundered about in that

colossal hand like a codfish at the bottom of a boat; and he uttered gasps of astonishment and wrath, to which the squeals of his female kinsfolks formed a chorus. But he got no harm, for when Mr. Jigger had gently brought his nose in contact with the rafters of the ceiling, turned him from one hand to the other, dangled him over the heads of the audience like a puppet, and finally made a pretence of swallowing him, he let his Worship have peace by restoring him to his seat.

The Mayor sat during the next five minutes bereft of speech and perspiring big drops, while the feminine part of the audience cackled their sympathy for him like a flock of frightened poultry. As for the men, they were staring at the Yankee, who was fast reducing himself to his natural size. A faint burst of applause escaped from the calmer spectators when he had dwindled into the original U. B. Jigger and exclaimed:

"Now, gentlemen, we have no time to waste, so I am going to become a dwarf one inch big."

Then he singled out Mr. Meeks, the curate. "You, sir, there—come near the platform, and when I'm no larger than your watch-key take me up, please, and pass me round among the ladies."

Mr. Meeks did as he was bid. He smiled, but he was uneasy. His faith in the "Pepper's Ghost" explanation had been shaken by the treatment inflicted on the Mayor, and now it vanished in qualms as he beheld Mr. Jigger diminish by inches till he became small as a boy—small as

a doll—and finally Lilliputian in littleness, so that he could have been stowed away easily in the finger of a glove. Mr. Meeks would much rather not have lifted the human atom, whose gesticulations alarmed him, and whose voice reached his ears like the buzzing of a gnat; but he feared to pass for a poltroon, and so did his duty. The ladies, however, retreated with shrieks when he begged them, in rather quaking accents, to handle the reduced Mr. Jigger. The Yankee, sprawling on his stomach, with his coat-tails spread out (for he could not keep his balance on foot in the curate's trembling hand) looked like a restive blackbeetle. Everybody stared at him, but there was an evident general apprehension that he would bite if touched; and this fear was speedily quickened by Mr. Meeks setting up a yell.

“Oh! oh! he's crawling up my sleeve!” exclaimed he.

The curate clutched at his coat and his eyes started from his head. The Yankee was creeping up to his shoulder—up his back, along his neck, till, issuing above his shirt-collar, he sat astride his nape and there remained firmly perched, till, by rapid degrees, he reassumed his proper size, and made the appalled divine totter under his weight.

“There, sir, I hope you are satisfied now?” he cried, scrambling down with a laugh.

“Oh, oh! There is something devilish in this,” stammered poor Mr. Meeks, and he subsided into a chair, where some compassionate ladies brought him their smelling-bottles. He complained of having bruises all up the arm and spine, where the dwarf's little boots had scraped him.

"Devilish" was the word which now began to circulate freely among the audience; but curiosity kept spectators riveted to their places, while Mr. Jigger announced from the platform that he would proceed to new efforts. What he had done was wondrous, but he had things more marvellous still to do. He would perform some human multiplication—a thing useful for men hunted by the police; "for supposing a constable chivied any one of you," said he, particularly addressing the Mayor, as if that official stood in more danger than any one else of incurring such an adventure, "would it not be a convenient thing if you could start a dozen presentments of yourself in different directions, so as to make the policeman doubt which of you was the real man?"

Suiting the action to the word, Mr. Jigger gyrated slowly like a teetotum, and lo! there unaccountably issued from him a second Jigger, and from this one a third, and so on till there were twelve absolutely identical Jiggers, who, after spinning round a moment, drew up in a row and made their bows to the audience. It was impossible to tell which was the real Jigger, for all chorused in exactly the same voice: "Let's have a dance," whereupon an invisible orchestra struck up the last of Strauss's waltzes, and the twelve started off in perfect time. But now a bewildering thing occurred, for each of the dozen Jiggers was seen to be encircling a charming and beautifully-dressed partner, and all these young ladies were exactly alike in face, figure, and costume, so that they might have passed for sisters, just as the Jiggers would have been set down for twin brothers. The dance was

kept up with infinite spirit for five minutes ; then, by some diabolical process of absorption, the ladies vanished ; the men got amalgamated with one another, and disappeared one by one, till eventually the original Jigger stood once more alone on the stage, wiping his brow and grinning :

"There, now, I guess there isn't another here to do that."

Mr. Meeks felt bad as he noted these things, and so did the Mayor, for he happened to know that no band of music had been ordered, nor was it possible to have hidden one away in any place behind the stage. But his Worship had not recovered from his wrath at having been hoisted to the ceiling, so he brazened out his feelings by exclaiming again—

"Pooh ! there must be confederates. Maskelyne and Cooke do things as clever as that."

"I beg your pardon, sir ; what was your remark ?" inquired Mr. Jigger, speaking politely from the platform.

"I say that—that unless there is witchcraft in all this, you must have confederates," stammered the Mayor, turning very red.

"I will soon satisfy you that I have no confederates," said the lecturer quietly. "Ladies and gentlemen, prepare to have a dance in your turn."

Mr. Jigger approached the fiddle which the negro boy had brought in ; and, raising that instrument to his shoulder, drew the bow sharply over the strings. Instantly, by an irresistible impulse, the whole audience started to their feet. A second stroke set them shuffling ; at the third they kicked up their heels sorely against their wills and danced. The

fiddler had to submit to many an expostulation roared at him by the fatter members of the company, but he disregarded them, and addressed the audience in rather mocking words as he played :

"The slow measure is good to begin with," said he ; "but we'll try a little *crescendo* presently."

He waited until the audience had fallen into the measure of the thing, and then quickened his time ; his victims, with unspeakable disgust, forthwith accelerated their steps. It was not an ordinary dance, but a mere wild leaping aloft, in which each dancer kept the hands to his, or her, side like the "Perfect Cure."

The Mayor, though most corpulent, leaped higher than anybody. Meeks the curate, Sheares the tailor, the carpenter, and all the rest seemed to be trying to outvie one another in the prodigious bounds they made ; and the ladies, stricken with hysteric laughter, joined them step for step, though the unwonted exercise took all their breath away.

Luckily the Yankee was not a wicked man, or he might have danced the audience to death. He ceased his music as abruptly as he had begun it ; and immediately all the dancers sank into their seats with suffused faces, lolling tongues, and moans. At the same moment the negro boy reappeared with a tray loaded with tumblers of water, and Mr. Jigger made an hospitable statement :—

"Ladies and gentlemen, refreshment is good after exercise. These tumblers contain water ; but let each drinker mentally choose his favourite liquor—be it beer, wine, champagne, or

anything else—and he will find the water transformed to his liking.”

Some of the dancers swallowed their glasses without caring to have the contents changed, so thirsty were they; but those who had presence of mind enough to wish for expensive drinks, found themselves served with brimmers of the choicest Clicquot, the lightest claret, or the most potent brews of Jamaica rum. This formed a climax to the entertainment. The audience had no more spirit left to dispute the magical powers of Mr. Jigger. Indeed, they were so completely surprised with wonders, that they vouchsafed no astonishment at the peculiar mode of exit from the Hall which the Yankee chose.

The negro boy having opened a window wide, Mr. Jigger cried from the stage:

“Ladies and gentlemen, I am going back to my hotel, and I’ll choose the shortest cut.”

Saying this, he rose off the boards, floated quickly through the air, and flew out of the window, waving his arms and coat-tails like a large bat.

* * * * *

Though it was night, and freezing bitterly, all Chick-borough had turned out into the streets an hour later to discuss the diabolical magnetic *séance*, and to look out for the “Professor.” Presently a move was made towards the hotel, and Mr. Jigger was met issuing, with a carpet-bag in hand, and followed by the negro boy.

The Mayor courageously stopped him.

"I say, sir," cried his Worship, "just explain, please, how you did all this."

"Wall," answered the Yankee, pausing under a lamp-post and lighting a cigar. "Suppose—I only say suppose—I were to tell you that you were all under magnetic hallucination, and that nothing of what you imagine to have taken place really happened?"

"What?" stuttered the Mayor, with his mouth wide open.

"I must be off to catch the train," pleaded Mr. Jigger, disengaging himself; and he started off running.

Mr. Meeks the curate was persuaded that an odour of sulphur lingered behind him.



A TALE OF LOTTERY WINNINGS.

It is not every Frenchman who has bought a ticket for the Grand Lottery. Three respectable householders of the city of Seinebourg, MM. Radotte, Dardouillet, and Pompigeon, have declined to have anything to do with that institution, and they have made this resolve known to all their kinsfolk and acquaintances, in consequence of a misadventure which occurred to them at a former lottery. The story illustrates so well what freaks Fortune will play now and then with respectable, steady-going men, that it deserves to be pondered over with sympathetic attention.

A few years ago the kitchen chimney of the Franciscan Monastery at Seinebourg having been blown down in a gale, the poor Brown Friars went dolefully to their Bishop to beg funds for the restoration of that monument. The Bishop had no money to give, but he begged the Prefect to apply to Government for leave to organise a lottery, and the permission was at once granted, because the Prefect was a right-minded man, who had used his interest diligently in what he believed to be a pious cause. The Bishop, on his side, went to work with kindly zeal, and soon enlisted the co-

operation of all the ladies of his diocese, who contributed prizes, and became active agents for the sale of the lottery tickets.

As always happens with charities patronised by the clergy, this lottery prospered apace, and its original scope grew much enlarged. Instead of merely rebuilding a new chimney-stack for the Brown Friars, it was agreed that these holy men must have a new kitchen fitted up, with the latest culinary improvements—a range, a gas-stove, a steam-jack; and that, moreover, an icehouse should be built near the kitchen to keep the friars' fish nice and cool on Fridays. The proposals having excited the indignation of the Liberal party, the lottery became a distinctly clerical affair, which men supported or banned according as they wished to stand well or ill with the Bishop.

On the whole, the supporters were more numerous than the detractors. All the tradesmen who wished to keep on good terms with religiously disposed old ladies sent gifts out of their unsaleable stock; and these offerings were fitly crowned by an artist of local celebrity, who presented a grand picture of "Tobit and his Dog Flying from the Court of Shalmaneser," which had been refused at the Paris Salon. Let us hasten to add, however, that this work had not been refused owing to its demerits, but—so the artist avowed—because of its size, which was thirty feet by twenty, just the size of some of Raphael's works. The Bishop, taking a more generous view of the painting than the Parisian jury of artists had done, decreed that the picture of "Tobit and his Dog "

should form the grand prize in the lottery. He also valued it at ten thousand francs, or four hundred pounds.

It has just been said that Seinebourg was blessed with a Liberal party; and MM. Radotte, Dardouillet, and Pom-pigeon, above mentioned, were three of its most fervent champions. The first was a breeder and vendor of tame magpies (warranted to talk), the second a patentee of hygienic under-clothing, and a third kept a noted pie-shop. Now these three Liberals had from the first lifted up their voices derisively against the lottery; but they had bought tickets, in the first place because they had been solicited by ladies of rank, and in the second because they hoped to win something.

This is the way of the world. Radotte, Dardouillet, and Pom-pigeon, when they met at the café, poked uproarious fun at the Brown Friars, their kitchen, and their cool fish; but if either of them could have won a hundred francs' worth of goods with his tenpenny ticket, he would have been satisfied that he had done his best to spoil the Church in a small way. All three opined that it would be a capital joke if the best prizes were to fall to freethinkers, and they repeated this loudly in public places in order to shield themselves from any suspicion of having invested their tenpences with a religious object.

The prizes having been exhibited for weeks in a public room which had been hired for the purpose, and got to look like a cheap bazaar, the drawing was advertised on yellow posters placarded all over the town, and at length the

important day arrived. It was ushered in by a grand procession of Brown Friars, who marched to the Episcopal Palace to receive all the money that had been collected, and at the same time to thank the Bishop for the paternal interest which he had taken in their kitchen; then the procession having been joined by two others of Black Sisters and of



Grey ones, all these saintly men and women wended their way together to the Mairie, where the drawing was to take place.

It was an imposing sight. The Bishop was there in a violet cassock, so was the Prefect in a braided swallow-tail, and the Mayor in his tri-coloured sash. On the front of the platform, which was crowded with Brown Friars and nuns,

was set a big glass receptacle, shaped like a knife-cleaner, and full of tickets, which were to be extracted by little girls from an orphan school. The body of the hall was filled with a dense throng of ticket-holders, among whom MM. Radotte, Dardouillet, and Pompigeon sat conspicuous.

Now these three citizens, seated side by side, nudged each other, grinning and making jokes about Popish superstitions incidentally to the numbers on the tickets.

"See here, my ticket is '1,313,'" remarked Radotte, the breeder of tame magpies. "If there be anything in old wives' fables, such a ticket ought to bring me double ill-luck."

"Mine's '7,' and that's a bad number too," chuckled Dardouillet, who sold hygienic under-clothing. "Aren't there seven cardinal vices?"

"Yes, but there are seven deadly virtues too," smiled Pompigeon, the pieman. "But my number is '49,' and they say that's unlucky too, because it's seven times seven, and makes the grand climacteric. People are believed to have a good chance of dying at forty-nine."

"Well, you'll be just in time to catch that chance, for you're forty-eight and a half," grinned Radotte.

"Silence!" bawled an usher, and the three Liberals held their peace, greatly amused at their own wit.

Meanwhile the drawing commenced, and by a strange coincidence the gloomy prognostications of the three friends were immediately set at nought, for the very first number that left the wheel was "1,313," and immediately afterwards

the numbers "7" and "49" were drawn likewise. To describe the feelings of MM. Radotte, Dardouillet, and Pompigeon would be difficult, for they sat with faces crimson from excitement. The breeder of talkative magpies did not realise that he had won a colossal picture of "Tobit and his Dog." The only thing that struck him was the value placed upon this work of art, and he imagined that he had drawn ten thousand francs in money. As for the hosier and the pieman, they were agitated partly from jealousy at their friend's luck, and partly from not knowing what their own prizes might be. The only "lot" proclaimed was the grand prize, the owners of other winning tickets being informed that they would find out the nature of their prizes on applying at the bazaar.

The three Liberals, however, were so enthusiastically patted on the back by their friends, that they all concluded they had made a good day's work, and no sooner was the drawing over than they posted off to the bazaar in company. Here a strange disappointment awaited two of them. Dardouillet, the hosier, on reference to the catalogue, found his prize described as follows :

"Lot 23. A live tom-cat, answering to the name of 'Grenadier,' for many years the property of the late Countess de Calineaux, who highly valued his lovable qualities."

Then came the turn of Pompigeon, the pieman, who found he had won this :

"Lot 36. Twenty-five lessons in fencing and gymnastics,

to be given gratis by Captain Duracuir, professor of arms, late of the 10th Zouaves."

Now these winnings seemed to Dardouillet and Pompigeon very bad jokes indeed, and they were made worse by the unseemly levity of Radotte, who, still believing he had won ten thousand francs, could afford to be merry. He even went the length of inviting his two chums to dinner at the best hotel in the town, in order that they might "wet" his luck with libations of Champagne.

"Cheer up," said he, unable to refrain from laughing at the wry faces of the pair. "We'll go and have a good dinner. A cat isn't such a bad prize, after all; and as for the gymnastic lessons, they'll do you a power of good, Pompigeon, for you're a fat fellow who wants reducing."

"I'm not going to accept that beast of a cat," exclaimed Dardouillet indignantly. "I hate cats, and old countesses' cats worse than all."

"And I, do you think I'm going to waste my time in taking fencing lessons from a swash-buckling Zouave, who'll expect me to stand him a glass of absinthe every time I go to him?" sang out Pompigeon. "Why, I know Duracuir, a red-nosed rogue with a carrotty moustache, who's never sober after midday."

"Well, certainly, Pompigeon, I do think, on second thoughts, you are a trifle too round in the girth to enjoy gymnastics," laughed Radotte. "If I were you, I'd ask Duracuir to stand *you* five-and-twenty glasses of absinthe instead of giving you lessons."

"That's right, make sport of an old friend on the strength of your luck," exclaimed Pompigeon, who was very touchy about his girth. "If I were you, though, I'd make quite sure that my picture was saleable, for I have heard rumours to the contrary."

This proved an unlucky speech, for it deprived the hosier and the pieman of the dinner which they were to have had at the hotel. Radotte fell to reflecting, and thought he would go and take another look at "Tobit and his Dog Flying from the Court of Shalmaneser." There was a suspicious alacrity on the part of the clerk in attendance, who said—

"Ah, M. Radotte, I congratulate you. The picture shall be sent to your house by ten o'clock to-morrow."

"To my house! What are you thinking of!" exclaimed Radotte. "Why I haven't a room that will hold it. There isn't a window, or a door either, large enough to let it pass. I mean to sell the thing."

"You are quite welcome to sell it if you can find a customer," answered the clerk dryly; "but you must remove the picture from these premises to-morrow, as the room is wanted for other purposes. I dare say you can have the painting warehoused somewhere by paying."

"I pay for warehousing!" ejaculated Radotte in disgust. "Why, you clerical people seem to have a queer idea of prizes. I intend to make money out of this affair, and not to disburse a sou, if I know it."

"Well, I hope you'll succeed," rejoined the clerk. "To

tell you the truth, though, the artist could never sell his work, and he seems to have given it us simply because it was an encumbrance and an eyesore in his studio."

"Then this whole lottery is a swindle?" roared Radotte.

"No, it was a work of charity," responded the clerk, and he hurried off to deliver an enamelled saucepan which had been won by a Marchioness; and a feeding-bottle, which had fallen to the lot of an Archdeacon.

While these things were passing at the bazaar Dardouillet and Pompigeon had trudged off, discomfited, to their respective homes, where lamentable adventures awaited them. Dardouillet, to begin with, found that the tom-cat "Grenadier" had already been brought to his shop, and this beast was strangely misconducting himself. He had scratched Madame Dardouillet, who loathed cats, and on being reproved with a broomstick had overturned a petroleum lamp, which shed its flaming oil over a pile of brand-new hygienic under-clothing. Not content with this, he was marking his sense of the inhospitable reception he had received by careering round the shop with leaps and bounds, and upsetting everything breakable that stood in his way. At length he was kicked out of the shop, tail foremost, just as the hosier crossed the threshold.

"Take away that cat," screamed Madame Dardouillet, rushing out with her cap awry. Whereon Dardouillet, finding the animal had taken refuge between his legs, where he was miawling and spitting, caught him by the scruff and rolled him up in the skirt of his overcoat, crying, "I'll take

him off to Pompigeon, who wants a cat to keep the rats from getting at his veal pies." This he said because he was anxious to get clear of the domestic coast just at present to avoid a trying scene with his consort.

Unfortunately, Pompigeon was just then in the midst of a little difficulty of his own, for Captain Duracuir, the professor of arms, had called, and wanted to know when the pieman would take the first lesson in fencing? The ex-Zouave smelt strongly of spirituous drinks, and was speaking very close to the nose of Pompigeon, who winced and remarked that his numerous business occupations prevented his devoting himself to calisthenic exercises.

"That's all bosh," laughed the Captain, giving him a slap on the waistcoat. "We must take down a little of this fat between us. You'll be quite a different man when I've set you spinning on the trapeze and touched up your calves a little with my singlestick. To-morrow at four o'clock, just before absinthe-hour, is my time."

"No; I'm much obliged to you," replied Pompigeon firmly; "I cannot really leave my shop to go and turn summersaults."

"You talk as if I were a professor of Mountebankery," remarked the Captain, giving an ominous twist to his moustache, and so saying his brow grew black. "I beg you to observe, too, that these twenty-five lessons which I offer you are a free gift on my part."

"It's very kind of you," cried the pieman impatiently, "but I don't want your lessons."

"Then you make mockery of my gift?"

"No; but I have my pies to attend to."

"Or, perhaps, you despise my science, and think that I can't wield a sword better than you handle your carving-knife?"

"This is an uncalled for personality!" exclaimed the pieman, wounded in a sore point, for he was very deft at carving. "I'll back myself with my knives against you with your skewers, any day."

"Enough, sir," shouted the Captain, who had turned livid. "I have only received one insult once in the course of my life, and the man who dared to inflict it is dead. Unless you come to my rooms to-morrow to apologise and take the gymnastic lessons which I do you the honour to offer, I'll fetch you by the nose. Do you hear that, sir? Now, good night," and the Captain strode off with a grand swagger, as though he had lost the battle of Sedan all by himself.

It was just at this unpropitious moment that Dardouillet bounced into the shop, carrying "Grenadier," who had been clawing at his pantaloons all down the street, till the hosier was sick of his company. Dardouillet deposited the cat on the counter, exclaiming, "Here, Pompigeon, is a mouser for you;" but the pieman was beside himself with wrath, and espying "Grenadier" in the act of exploring one of his veal pies, he caught him by the tail and swung him across the street with such force that the Countess de Calineaux's pet went crashing on to the top of a hot chestnut stall.

It so chanced that at that instant a Commissionaire de Police passed, who was fonder of dumb creatures than of other ones, and seeing a cat thus maltreated his best feelings caught fire.

"This is cruelty to animals, Monsieur Pompigeon," cried he. "I'll make my report in the proper quarters, and you'll hear more of this to-morrow."

* * * * *

Unhappy Dardouillet ! ill-starred Pompigeon ! The fate of these two lottery winners was bad enough, but the case of Radotte, the breeder of magpies, was even worse. He spent the night inquiring into the saleability of pictures measuring thirty feet by twenty feet, and acquired the conviction that no living soul was ever likely to purchase such works of art. Nor would anybody accept them as a gift. So when at ten in the morning a huge van escorted by all the dirty jeering boys and girls of the quarter, drove up to Radotte's door with the famous painting of "Tobit and his Dog," the magpie man came out on the pavement and expostulated in feeling terms.

"I'm not going to take that ugly thing in here," he shouted.

"As you please," said the van-driver. "We must leave it at your door, though ; such are our orders."

"But I won't let it stand at my door."

"You had better pay some one to cart it off then as rubbish."

"This dialogue gave rise to a painful scene, during which

much bad language was exchanged in the hearing of a shopful of magpies, all apt pupils in verbiage. In the end the exasperated Radotte, at whom a mob was jibing, thought he would leave the picture in the road, and settle the question that way ; but mocking crowds obstruct the circulation of a thoroughfare, and soon a policeman appeared, who called sternly upon the magpie-man to remove his "nuisance" from off the municipal pavement.

"Remove it yourself !" yelled Radotte. "It's you who are a nuisance with your absurd talk."

"You are insulting an official in the execution of his duty," remarked the policeman, whipping out a pocket-book, "and, moreover, you are creating a public disturbance."

"You be hanged !" sang out the magpie-man, furious, "and Tobit too, and his Dog, and the Bishop, and the Brown Friars, and their kitchen, and the Black Sisters,—you may all go to the deuce together."

"Very good ; this is blasphemy in a public thoroughfare. You are not a Liberal for nothing, M. Radotte," remarked the Bonapartist grimly. "Now just favour me by walking to the police-station."

Let us not prolong the harrowing story. M. Radotte, the magpie-man, had to eat humble pie in the presence of constituted authorities, and was glad to pay for the removal of his picture by a ragman, who thought something might be done by selling the canvas for sail-cloth and the frame for firewood. Pompigeon, meantime, had to pay a fine for assaulting "Grenadier," and afterwards made his obsequious

apologies to Captain Duracuir, whom he bought off from giving him gymnastic lessons by a present consisting of bottles of brandy and veal pies. As for Dardouillet, he spent an acute week, healing the rents which "Grenadier" had made in his garments and in his skin; and he was subsequently compelled to pension off this cat into the keeping of a petless old woman, in order that public opinion might not brand him as a hater of poor dumb brutes and a mocker of clerical gifts.

So this is all the three Liberals of Seinebourg got by their winnings. The reader will understand why they have not cared to dabble in lottery speculations since.

THE END.

7



42, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND,
NOVEMBER, 1885.

VIZETELLY & CO.'S
NEW BOOKS,
AND NEW EDITIONS.

NEW WORK BY THE AUTHOR OF "SIDE-LIGHTS
ON ENGLISH SOCIETY."

In large post 8vo, 434 pp., cloth gilt, price 10s. 6d.

IMPRISONED IN A SPANISH CONVENT:

AN ENGLISH GIRL'S EXPERIENCES.

By E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS PAGE AND OTHER ENGRAVINGS.



"Instead of the meek cooing dove with naked feet and a dusty face who had talked of dying for me, I had now a bright-eyed rosy-cheeked companion who had cambric pocket-handkerchiefs with violet scent on them and smoked cigarettes on the sly."—Page 75.

(For other works by MR. GRENVILLE-MURRAY, see pages 7, 8, and 9.)

In crown 8vo, 5s.

UNDER THE SUN.

ESSAYS MAINLY WRITTEN IN HOT COUNTRIES.

FORMING THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE CHOICER MISCELLANEOUS WORKS
OF GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

Illustrated with an etched Portrait of the Author, and Twelve Page Engravings.

A SMALL NUMBER OF COPIES OF THE ABOVE WORK HAVE BEEN PRINTED IN DEMY OCTAVO,
ON HAND-MADE PAPER, WITH THE ILLUSTRATIONS ON INDIA PAPER MOUNTED.

(For other works by MR. G. A. SALA, see pages 11 and 12.)

NEW STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF THE CHEVELEY NOVELS.

In Crown 8vo, tastefully bound, price 3s. 6d.

HIS CHILD FRIEND.

By the Author of "A MODERN MINISTER," "SAUL WEIR," "SOULS AND CITIES," &c.



"By the aid of the chimney with the register up Mrs. Lupcombe's curiosity was, to a certain extent, gratified."—Page 19.

In post 8vo, cloth gilt, price 3s. 6d.

NO ROSE WITHOUT A THORN, AND OTHER TALES.

By F. C. BURNAND, H. SAVILE CLARKE, R. E. FRANCILLON, &c.

*Illustrated with numerous Page and other Engravings from Designs by R. CALDECOTT,
LINLEY SAMBOURNE, M. E. EDWARDS, F. DADD, &c.*

"There is much that is original and clever in these 'Society' tales."—*Athenaeum*.

"Many of the stories are of the greatest merit."—*Daily Telegraph*.

In post 8vo, cloth gilt, price 3s. 6d.

**THE DOVE'S NEST,
AND OTHER TALES.**

By JOSEPH HATTON, RICHARD JEFFERIES, H. SAVILE CLARKE, &c.

Illustrated with numerous Page and other Engravings from designs by

R. CALDECOTT, CHARLES KEENE, M. E. EDWARDS, ADELAIDE CLAXTON, &c.

"We strongly advise the reader to begin with 'How one ghost was laid,' and to follow it up with 'Jack's wife,' with whom by the way as portrayed both by artist and author he cannot fail to fall in love. These two graceful little extravaganzas will put him into so excellent a temper that he will thoroughly enjoy the good things that follow."—*Life*.

In crown 8vo, neatly bound, price 6s.

PRINCE ZILAH.

By JULES CLARETIE.

Translated from the 57th French edition, and forming Vol. XL of

VIZETELLY'S ONE-VOLUME NOVELS.

"M. Jules Claretie has of late taken a conspicuous place as a novelist in France."—*Times*.

NEW VOLUMES OF ZOLA'S REALISTIC NOVELS.

In crown 8vo, illustrated with Tinted Page Engravings, price 6s. each.

I.
THE RUSH FOR THE SPOIL (LA CURÉE).

TRANSLATED FROM THE 34TH FRENCH EDITION.

II.
THE LADIES' PARADISE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE 50TH FRENCH EDITION.

III.
THÉRÈSE RAQUIN.

The above works are also published, without the Engravings, price 5s. each.

THE BOULEVARD NOVELS,

In small 8vo, attractively bound, 2s. 6d.

I.
NANA'S DAUGHTER.

A STORY OF PARISIAN LIFE.

By ALFRED SIRVEN and HENRI LEVERDIER.

From the 35th French Edition.

4 *VIZETELLY & CO'S RECENT PUBLICATIONS.*

VIZETELLY'S SIXPENNY SERIES OF AMUSING BOOKS.

In picture cover, with many Engravings, price 6d.

MATRIMONY BY ADVERTISEMENT;

AND OTHER ADVENTURES OF A JOURNALIST.

By CHARLES G. PAYNE.

Contains the Author's experiences in a Madhouse as an "Amateur Maniac," on a hansom as an "Amateur Cabby," as well as the details of a pretended search for a wife through the agency of the Matrimonial Journals, and other amusing articles.



"She pressed herself against his ponderous side as he walked along. It was a trick that she learned from a precocious kitten."

Uniform with the above, and by the same Author.

VOTE FOR POTTLEBECK!

THE STORY OF A POLITICIAN IN LOVE.

Illustrated with a Frontispiece and numerous other Engravings.

In paper cover, 1s. ; or in parchment binding, gilt on side, 2s. 6d.

ADMIRABLY SUITED FOR PRIVATE REPRESENTATION.

THE PASSER-BY:

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

By FRANÇOIS COPPÉE, of the French Academy.

TRANSLATED, WITH THE AUTHOR'S SANCTION, FROM THE 41ST FRENCH EDITION,

By LUGI, Author of "The Red Cross," &c.

"A translation exceedingly well done."—*Whitehall Review*.

NEW SATIRICAL POEM, BY A WELL-KNOWN POET.

In crown 8vo, price 1s.

LUCIFER IN LONDON,

AND HIS REFLECTIONS ON LIFE, MANNERS, AND THE PROSPECTS OF SOCIETY.

"Shows a good deal of observation, and reflects the spirit of the age in making Lucifer intellectually curious and easily bored."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

"Decidedly witty and original."—*Sunday Times*.

In paper cover, 1s. ; or cloth gilt, 2s. 6d.

PATTER POEMS,

HUMOROUS AND SERIOUS, FOR READINGS AND RECITATIONS.

By WALTER PARKE.

With Illustrations by J. Leitch.

"'Patter Poems' include many sparkling and merry lays, well adapted for recitation, and sure of the approval of the audience. We hope Mr. Parke will continue to produce humours as delightful as 'The Wonderful What's-his-name,' and the pleasant and truthful sketch of 'The Demon Tragedian.'"—*Saturday Review*.

NEW VOLUMES OF DU BOISGOBEY'S SENSATIONAL NOVELS.

In scarlet covers, 1s. each.

"M. du Boisgobey gives us no tiresome descriptions or laboured analyses of character; under his facile pen plots full of incident are quickly opened and unwound. He does not stop to moralise; all his art consists in creating intricacies which shall keep the reader's curiosity on the stretch, and offer a full scope to his own really wonderful ingenuity for unravelling."—*Times*.

THE DAY OF RECKONING. 2 Vols.

THE SEVERED HAND.

BERTHA'S SECRET.

"A most effective romance, depending for its interest on the skilful weaving and unweaving of mysteries. 'Bertha's Secret' is very well worth perusal."—*Times*.

WHO DIED LAST? OR, THE RIGHTFUL HEIR.

THE CRIME OF THE OPERA HOUSE. 2 Vols.



WORKS BY E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY.

NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION.

Two Vols. large post 8vo, attractively bound, price 15s.

UNDER THE LENS:

SOCIAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

By E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ABOUT 300 ENGRAVINGS BY WELL-KNOWN ARTISTS

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

JILTS :—Mrs. Pinkerton—A Western County Belle—Zoe, Lady Tryon—An Incensurable Jilt—A Jilted Drysalter—Love and Pickles—An Entr'acte—Mrs. Frago and Miss Daisy Caunter—A Widow with a Nice Little Estate—An Unmercenary Pair of Jilts.

ADVENTURERS AND ADVENTURESSES :—Of the Genus Generally—Matrimonial Adventurers—The Joint Stock Company Chairman—A Financial Adventurer—A Professional Greek—The Countess D'Orenbarre—Lady Goldsworth—Mirabel Hildacourse—Lily Gore—Bella Martingale—Pious Mrs. Palmhold—Mrs. Decoy—Mrs. Lawkins.

PUBLIC SCHOOLBOYS AND UNDERGRADUATES :—Drawbacks of Eton—Of Various Eton Boys—Rugby and Rugbeians—Harrow, Winchester, Westminster—Oxford Undergraduates—University Discipline—Sporting and Athletic Undergraduates—Reading and Religious Undergraduates.

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

SPENDTHRIFTS :—Prefatory—The Gambletons—Lord Charles Innynge—Lord Luke Poor—Lord Rottenham—Lord Barker—The Marquis of Malplaquet—The Lords Lumber—Sir Calling Earley—Tommy Dabble—Dickie Duff.

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN (M.P.'s) :—Preliminary—Erudite Members—Crotchety Members—Free Lances—The Irish Contingent—Very Noble M.P.'s—Money Bags—Beery M.P.'s—Workingmen M.P.'s—Party Leaders—A Seatless Member.

SOME WOMEN I HAVE KNOWN :—An Ex-Beauty—Miss Jenny—Mademoiselle Sylvie—Miss Rose—Madame de l'Esbrouffe-Tourbillon.

ROUGHS OF HIGH AND LOW DEGREE :—How Roughs are Made—The Nobleman Rough—The Foreign Garrison Rough—The Clerical Rough—The Legal Rough—Medical Roughts—The Rough Flirt—The Wife-Beating Rough—Vandal Roughts—The Tourist Rough—The Nautical Rough—The Professional Bruiser—The Low-Class Rough—Women Roughts.

"Brilliant, highly-coloured sketches. . . contains beyond doubt some of the best writing that has come from Mr. Grenville-Murray's pen."—*St. James's Gazette*.

"Limned audaciously, unsparingly, and with much ability."—*World*.

"Distinguished by their pitiless fidelity to nature."—*Society*.

"Extremely personal. The author, brilliant as were his parts, appears to have laboured under a delusion which obliged him to mistake personal abuse for satire, and ill-nature for moral indignation."—*Athenaeum*.

"Some of Mr. Murray's trenchant blows do real service to the cause of public morality and order."—*Daily Telegraph*.

"Includes unvarnished portraits of various characters who have made a flutter in recent times in this little world of ours."—*Fanny Fair*.



Fourth Edition, in post 8vo, handsomely bound, price 7s. 6d.

SIDE-LIGHTS ON ENGLISH SOCIETY:

Sketches from Life, Social and Satirical.

By E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NEARLY 300 CHARACTERISTIC ENGRAVINGS.

CONTENTS:—I. FLIRTS. II. ON HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S SERVICE. III. SEMI-DETACHED WIVES. IV. NOBLE LORDS. V. YOUNG WIDOWS. VI. OUR SILVERED YOUTH, OR NOBLE OLD BOYS.

"This is a startling book. The volume is expensively and elaborately got up; the writing is bitter, unsparing, and extremely clever."—*Vanity Fair*.

"Mr. Grenville-Murray sparkles very steadily throughout the present volume, and puts to excellent use his incomparable knowledge of life and manners, of men and cities, of appearances and facts. Of his several descants upon English types, I shall only remark that they are brilliantly and dashinglly written, curious as to their matter, and admirably readable."—*Truth*.

"No one can question the brilliancy of the sketches, nor affirm that 'Side-Lights' is aught but a fascinating book The book is destined to make a great noise in the world."—*Whitell Review*.

Second Edition, with Frontispiece and Vignette, price 5s.

HIGH LIFE IN FRANCE UNDER THE REPUBLIC:

SOCIAL AND SATIRICAL SKETCHES IN PARIS AND THE PROVINCES.

By E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY,

AUTHOR OF "SIDE LIGHTS ON ENGLISH SOCIETY," &c.

"Take this book as it stands, with the limitations imposed upon its author by circumstances, and it will be found very enjoyable. . . . The volume is studded with shrewd observations on French life at the present day."—*Spectator*.

"A very clever and entertaining series of social and satirical sketches, almost French in their point and vivacity."—*Contemporary Review*.

Second Edition, in large 8vo, handsomely bound, with gilt edges, price 10s. 6d.

PEOPLE I HAVE MET.

BY E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY.

Illustrated with 54 tinted Page Engravings, from Designs by FRED. BARNARD.

CONTENTS :—

The Old Earl.	The Rector.	The Doctor.	The Bachelor.
The Dowager.	The Curate.	The Retired Colonel.	The Younger Son.
The Family Solicitor.	The Governess.	The Chaperon.	The Grandmother.
The College Don.	The Tutor.	The Usurer.	The Newspaper Editor.
The Rich Widow.	The Promising Son.	The Spendthrift.	The Butler.
The Ornamental Director.	The Favourite Daughter.	Le Nouveau Riche.	The Devotee.
The Old Maid.	The Squire.	The Maiden Aunt.	



THE RICH WIDOW (reduced from the original engraving).

"Mr. Grenville-Murray's pages sparkle with cleverness and with a shrewd wit, caustic or cynical at times, but by no means excluding a due appreciation of the softer virtues of women and the sterner excellences of men. The talent of the artist (Mr. Barnard) is akin to that of the author, and the result of the combination is a book that, once taken up, can hardly be laid down until the last page is perused."—*Spectator*.

"Mr. Grenville Murray's sketches are genuine studies, and are the best things of the kind that have been published since 'Sketches by Boz,' to which they are superior in the sense in which artistically executed character portraits are superior to caricatures."—*St. James's Gazette*.

"From first to last, as might be expected, the book is well written."—*Standard*.

"No book of its class can be pointed out so admirably calculated to show another generation the foibles and peculiarities of the men and women of our times."—*Morning Post*.

"All of Mr. Grenville Murray's portraits are clever and life-like, and some of them are not unworthy of a model who was more before the author's eyes than Addison—namely, Thackeray."—*Truth*.

An Edition of "PEOPLE I HAVE MET" is published in small 8vo, with Frontispiece, price 8s. 6d.



A BUCK OF THE REGENCY: from "DUTCH PICTURES."

"Mr. Sala's best work has in it something of Montaigne, a great deal of Charles Lamb—made deeper and broader—and not a little of Lamb's model, the accomplished and quaint Sir Thomas Brown. These 'Dutch Pictures' and 'Pictures Done With a Quill' should be placed alongside Oliver Wendell Holmes's inimitable budgets of friendly gossip and Thackeray's 'Roundabout Papers.' They display to perfection the quick eye, good taste, and ready hand of the born essayist—they are never tiresome."—*Daily Telegraph*.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA'S WORKS.

Second Edition, in demy 8vo, cloth gilt, price 12s. 6d.

A JOURNEY DUE SOUTH; TRAVELS IN SEARCH OF SUNSHINE.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

ILLUSTRATED WITH 16 FULL-PAGE ENGRAVINGS BY VARIOUS ARTISTS.

CONTENTS:—

- | | |
|---|---|
| I.—A Few Hours in the Delightful City. | XVI.—Venice Preserved. |
| II.—Life at Marseilles. | XVII.—The Two Romes. I. The Old. |
| III.—Southern Fare and Bouillabaisse. | XVIII.—The Two Romes. II. The New. |
| IV.—Nice and its Nefarious Neighbour. | XIX.—The Two Romes. II. The New (cont.) |
| V.—Quite Another Nice. | XX.—The Roman Season. |
| VI.—From Nice to Bastia. | XXI.—In the Vatican: Mosaics. |
| VII.—On Shore at Bastia. | XXII.—With the Trappists in the Cam- |
| VIII.—The Diligence come to Lifo again. | pagna. |
| IX.—Sunday at Ajaccio. | XXIII.—From Naples to Pompeii. |
| X.—The Hotel too soon. | XXIV.—The Show of a Long-Buried Past. |
| XI.—The House in St. Charles Street, | XXV.—The "Movimento" of Naples. |
| Ajaccio. | XXVI.—In the Shade. |
| XII.—A Winter City. | XXVII.—Spring Time in Paris. |
| XIII.—Genoa the Superb: the City of the | XXVIII.—"To All the Glories of France." |
| Leaning Tower. | XXIX.—Le Roi Soleil and La Belle Bour- |
| XIV.—Austere Bologna. | bonnaise. |
| XV.—A Day of the Dead. | XXX.—A Queen's Plaything. |

"In 'A Journey due South' Mr. Sala is in his brightest and cheeriest mood, ready with quip, and jest, and anecdote, brimful of allusion ever happy and pat."—*Saturday Review*.

In crown 8vo, price 5s.

DUTCH PICTURES, and PICTURES DONE WITH A QUILL.

Illustrated with a Frontispiece and other Page Engravings.

FORMING THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE

CHOICER MISCELLANEOUS WORKS OF GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

A SMALL NUMBER OF COPIES OF THE ABOVE WORK HAVE BEEN PRINTED IN DEMY OCTAVO, ON HAND-MADE PAPER, WITH THE ILLUSTRATIONS ON INDIA PAPER MOUNTED.

The Graphic remarks: "We have received a sumptuous new edition of Mr. G. A. Sala's well-known 'Dutch Pictures.' It is printed on rough paper, and is enriched with many admirable illustrations."

Eighth Edition, in crown 8vo, 558 pages, attractively bound, price 3s. 6d., or gilt at the side and with gilt edges, 4s.

PARIS HERSELF AGAIN.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

WITH 350 CHARACTERISTIC ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRENCH ARTISTS.

"On subjects like those in his present work, Mr. Sala is at his best."—*The Times*.

"This book is one of the most readable that has appeared for many a day. Few Englishmen know so much of old and modern Paris as Mr. Sala."—*Truth*.

"'Paris Herself Again' is infinitely more amusing than most novels. There is no style so chatty and so unwearying as that of which Mr. Sala is a master."—*The World*.



"It was like your impudence to come smouchin' round here, looking after de white folks' waahin."

In One Volume, demy 8vo, 560 pages, price 12s., the FIFTH EDITION of

AMERICA REVISITED,

FROM THE BAY OF NEW YORK TO THE GULF OF MEXICO, & FROM LAKE MICHIGAN
TO THE PACIFIC INCLUDING A SOJOURN AMONG THE MORMONS IN SALT LAKE CITY.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NEARLY 400 ENGRAVINGS.

"In 'America Revisited' Mr. Sala is seen at his very best; better even than in his *Paris* book, more evenly genial and gay, and with a fresher subject to handle."—*World*.

"Mr. Sala's good stories lie thick as plums in a pudding throughout this handsome work."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

VIZETELLY'S ONE-VOLUME NOVELS.

"The idea of publishing cheap one-volume novels is a good one, and we wish the series very success."—*Saturday Review*.

In crown 8vo, good readable type, and attractive binding, price 6s. each.

THE THREATENING EYE.

By E. F. KNIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "A CRUISE IN THE FALCON."

"There is a good deal of power about this romance."—*Graphic*.

"One of those books that once begun is sure to be read through with avidity."—*Society*.

"Full of extraordinary power and originality. The story is one of quite exceptional force and impressiveness."—*Manchester Examiner*.

The Book that made M. Ohnet's reputation, and was crowned by the French Academy.

SECOND EDITION.

PRINCE SERGE PANINE.

By GEORGES OHNET,

AUTHOR OF "THE IRONMASTER."

TRANSLATED, WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT FROM THE 110TH FRENCH EDITION.

"This excellent version is sure to meet with large success on our side of the Channel."—*London Figaro*.

THE FORKED TONGUE.

By R. LANGSTAFF DE HAVILLAND, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "ENSLAVED," &c.

"In many respects the story is a remarkable one. Its men and women are drawn with power and without pity; their follies and their vices are painted in unmistakable colours, and with a skill that fascinates."—*Society*.

"Mr. de Havilland writes vigorously, and his story is full of incident and action."—*Pictorial World*.

BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND DAWN.

By INA L. CASSILIS,

AUTHOR OF "SOCIETY'S QUEEN," "STRANGELY WOOD: STRANGELY WON," &c.

"An ingenious plot, cleverly handled."—*Athenaeum*.

"The interest begins with the first page, and is ably sustained to the conclusion."—*Edinburgh Courant*.

In small 8vo, price 3s. 6d. each.

SIXTH EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED, AND WITH A SPECIAL PREFACE,

A MUMMER'S WIFE. A Realistic Novel.

By GEORGE MOORE, Author of "A Modern Lover."

"A striking book, different in tone from current English fiction. The woman's character is a very powerful study."—*Athenaeum*.

"A Mummer's Wife, in virtue of its vividness of presentation and real literary skill, may be regarded as in some degree a representative example of the work of a literary school that has of late years attracted to itself a good deal of the notoriety which is a very useful substitute for fame."—*Spectator*.

"A Mummer's Wife holds at present a unique position among English novels. It is a conspicuous success of its kind."—*Graphic*.

VIZETELLY & CO.'S ONE-VOLUME NOVELS—*Cheaper Issue.*

3s. 6d. each.

FIFTH EDITION.

THE IRONMASTER; OR, LOVE AND PRIDE.

By GEORGES OHNET.

TRANSLATED WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT FROM THE 146TH FRENCH EDITION.

"This work, the greatest literary success in any language of recent times, has already yielded its author upwards of £12,000."

THIRD EDITION.

MR. BUTLER'S WARD.

By MABEL ROBINSON.

"A charming book, poetically conceived, and worked out with tenderness and insight."—*Athenæum*.

"The heroine is a very happy conception, a beautiful creation whose affecting history is treated with much delicacy, sympathy, and command of all that is touching."—*Illustrated News*.

"All the characters are new to fiction, and the author is to be congratulated on having made so full and original a haul out of the supposed to be exhausted waters of modern society. . . . A writer who can at the outset write such admirable sense and transform the results of much minute observation into so pathetic and tender a whole, takes at once a high position."—*Graphic*.

SECOND EDITION.

THE CORSARS; OR, LOVE AND LUCRE.

By JOHN HILL.

AUTHOR OF "THE WATERS OF MARAH," "SALLY," &c.

"It is indubitable that Mr. Hill has produced a strong and lively novel, full of story, character, situations, murder, gold-mines, excursions, and alarms. The book is so rich in promise that we hope to receive some day from Mr. Hill a romance which will win every vote."—*Saturday Review*.

THIRD EDITION.

COUNTESS SARAH.

By GEORGES OHNET.

AUTHOR OF "THE IRONMASTER."

TRANSLATED, WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT, FROM THE 118TH FRENCH EDITION.

"The book contains some very powerful situations and first-rate character studies."—*Whitehall Review*.

"To an interesting plot is added a number of strongly-marked and cleverly drawn characters."—*Society*.

THIRD EDITION.

NUMA ROUMESTAN; OR, JOY ABROAD AND GRIEF AT HOME.

By ALPHONSE DAUDET.

TRANSLATED BY MRS. J. G. LAYARD.

"'Numa Roumestan' is a masterpiece; it is really a perfect work; it has no fault, no weakness. It is a compact and harmonious whole."—MR. HENRY JAMES.

"'Numa Roumestan' is a triumph for the art of literary seduction."—*Spectator*.



"Kiss me, dear," said Athénal.

In large crown 8vo, beautifully printed on toned paper, price 5s., or handsomely bound with gilt edges, suitable in every way for a present, 6s.

An Illustrated Edition of M. Ohnet's Celebrated Novel,

THE IRONMASTER; OR, LOVE AND PRIDE.

CONTAINING 42 FULL-PAGE ENGRAVINGS BY FRENCH ARTISTS, PRINTED SEPARATE FROM THE TEXT.

ZOLA'S POWERFUL REALISTIC NOVELS.

In crown 8vo, price 6s. each.

NANA:

TRANSLATED WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT FROM THE 127TH FRENCH EDITION.

Illustrated with Twenty-four Tinted Page Engravings, by French Artists.

Mr. HENRY JAMES on "NANA."

"A novelist with a system, a passionate conviction, a great plan—incontestable attributes of M. Zola—is not now to be easily found in England or the United States, where the story-teller's art is almost exclusively feminine, is mainly in the hands of timid (even when very accomplished) women, whose acquaintance with life is severely restricted, and who are not conspicuous for general views. The novel, moreover, among ourselves, is almost always addressed to young unmarried ladies, or at least always assumes them to be a large part of the novelist's public.

"This fact, to a French story-teller, appears, of course, a damnable restriction, and M. Zola would probably decline to take an *écrit* any work produced under such unnatural conditions. Half of life is a sealed book to young unmarried ladies, and how can a novel be worth anything that deals only with half of life? These objections are perfectly valid, and it may be said that our English system is a good thing for virgins and boys, and a bad thing for the novel itself, when the novel is regarded as something more than a simple *jeu d'esprit*, and considered as a composition that treats of life at large and helps us to *know*."

THE "ASSOMMOIR;"

(The Prelude to "NANA.")

TRANSLATED WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT FROM THE 97TH FRENCH EDITION.

Illustrated with Sixteen Tinted Page Engravings, by French Artists.

"After reading Zola's novels it seems as if in all others, even in the truest, there were a veil between the reader and the things described, and there is present to our minds the same difference as exists between the representations of human faces on canvas and the reflection of the same faces in a mirror. It is like finding truth for the first time."—*Signor de Amicis*.

PIPING HOT!

("POT-BOUILLE.")

TRANSLATED FROM THE 63RD FRENCH EDITION.

Illustrated with Sixteen Page Engravings by French Artists.

GERMINAL; OR, MASTER AND MAN.

TRANSLATED WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT FROM THE 47TH FRENCH EDITION.

The above Works are published without Illustrations, price 6s. each.

In preparation. Uniform with the above Volumes.

ABBE MOURET'S TRANSGRESSION.

By EMILE ZOLA.

SAPPHO.

By ALPHONSE DAUDET.

FROM THE 100TH FRENCH EDITION.



THE ARRIVAL OF THE ELEVEN YOUNG MEN AT NAKA'S EVENING PARTY.

New Illustrated Edition, in large octavo, of

M. EMILE ZOLA'S CELEBRATED REALISTIO NOVELS.

Each Volume contains about 100 Engravings, half of which are page-size.

The price is 7s. 6d. per volume.

1. NANA. 2. THE ASSOMMOIR. 3. PIPING HOT.

DESIGNS BY BELLENGER, BERTALL, CLAIRIN, ANDRÉ GILL,
KAUFFMANN, LOLOIR, VIERGE, &c.

Second Edition, in small 8vo, price 3s. 6d.

A MODERN LOVER.

BY GEORGE MOORE, AUTHOR OF "A MUMMER'S WIFE."

"Mr. Moore has a real power of drawing character, and some of his descriptive scenes are capital."—*St. James's Gazette*.

"It would be difficult to praise too highly the strength, truth, delicacy, and pathos of the incident of Gwynnie Lloyd, and the admirable treatment of the great sacrifice she makes. The incident is depicted with skill and beauty."—*Spectator*.

In small 8vo, price 3s. 6d.

CAROLINE BAUER AND THE COBURGS.

FROM THE GERMAN.

ILLUSTRATED with TWO carefully engraved PORTRAITS of CAROLINE BAUER.

"Caroline Bauer's name became in a mysterious and almost tragic manner connected with those of two men highly esteemed and well remembered in England—Prince Leopold of Coburg, the husband and widower of Princess Charlotte, afterwards first King of the Belgians, and his nephew, Prince Albert's trusty friend and adviser, Baron Stockmar."—*The Times*.

"Caroline Bauer was rather hardly used in her lifetime, but she certainly contrived to take a very exemplary revenge. People who offended her are gibbeted in one of the most fascinating books that has appeared for a long time."—*Vanity Fair*.

In large crown 8vo, handsomely printed and bound, price 6s.

**THE AMUSING
ADVENTURES OF GUZMAN OF ALFARAQUE.**

A SPANISH NOVEL. TRANSLATED BY EDWARD LOWDELL.

ILLUSTRATED WITH HIGHLY-FINISHED ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL FROM DESIGNS BY STAHL.

"The wit, vivacity and variety of this masterpiece cannot be over-estimated."—*Morning Post*.

"A very well executed translation of a famous 'Rogue's Progress.'"—*Spectator*.

In post 8vo, price 2s. 6d.

**THE CHILDISHNESS AND BRUTALITY OF
THE TIME:**

By HARGRAVE JENNINGS, Author of "The Rosicrucians," &c.

"Mr. Jennings has a knack of writing in good, racy, trenchant style. His sketch of behind the scenes of the Opera, and his story of a mutiny on board an Indiaman of the old time, are penned with surprising freshness and spirit."—*Daily News*.

In crown 8vo, price 6s., the Third and Completely Revised Edition of

THE STORY OF THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.

By HENRY VIZETELLY.

AUTHOR OF "BERLIN UNDER THE NEW EMPIRE," "PARIS IN PERIL," &c.

Illustrated with an Exact Representation of the Diamond Necklace, from a contemporary Drawing, and a Portrait of the Countess de la Motte, engraved on Steel.

"Had the most daring of our sensational novelists put forth the present plain unvarnished statement of facts as a work of fiction, it would have been denounced as so violating all probabilities as to be a positive insult to the common sense of the reader. Yet strange, startling, incomprehensible as is the narrative which the author has here evolved, every word of it is true."
—*Notes and Queries.*

*In square 8vo, paper cover, 1s., or cloth
gill, 2s. 6d.*

THE COMIC GOLDEN LEGEND.

By WALTER PARKE.

WITH HUMOROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY
J. LEITCH.

"Shows much facility in turning a verse,
and some talent for parody. The burlesque
of Delores is clever in its way."—*Graphic.*

"The stories are told in bright and luminous
verses in which are dexterously wrought
parodies of a good many present and some
past poets."—*Scotsman.*

"We have had no such imitations of the
idiosyncrasies of modern poets since the
days of the gifted brothers James and Horace
Smith."—*Lady's Pictorial.*

Uniform with the above.

SONGS OF SINGULARITY.

By WALTER PARKE.

ILLUSTRATED WITH 60 ENGRAVINGS.



In crown 8vo, price 3s. 6d.

A NEW EDITION, COMPRISING MUCH ADDITIONAL MATTER, OF IN STRANGE COMPANY.

By JAMES GREENWOOD (the "Amateur Casual").

ILLUSTRATED WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR, ENGRAVED ON STEEL.

In large 8vo, 160 pages and 130 Engravings, price 1s.

GORDON AND THE MAHDI.

An Illustrated Narrative of the Soudan War.

"This wonderfully good shilling's worth should command a wide sale."—*Illustrated News.*

In small post 8vo, ornamental scarlet covers, 1s. each.

THE GABORIAU AND DU BOISGOBEY SENSATIONAL NOVELS.

"Ah, friend, how many and many a while
They've made the slow time fleetly flow,
And solaced pain and charmed exile,
Boisgobey and Gaboriau!"

Ballade of Railway Novels in "Longman's Magazine."

IN PERIL OF HIS LIFE.

"A story of thrilling interest, and admirably translated."—*Sunday Times*.

"Hardly ever has a more ingenious circumstantial case been imagined than that which puts the hero in peril of his life, and the manner in which the proof of his innocence is finally brought about is scarcely less skillful."—*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*.

THE LEROUGE CASE.

"M. Gaboriau is a skilful and brilliant writer, capable of so diverting the attention and interest of his readers that not one word or line in his book will be skipped or read carelessly."—*Hampshire Advertiser*.

OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY.

"The interest is kept up throughout, and the story is told graphically and with a good deal of art."—*London Figaro*.

LECOQ THE DETECTIVE. Two Vols.

"In the art of forging a tangled chain of complicated incidents involved and inexplicable until the last link is reached and the whole made clear, Mr. Wilkie Collins is equalled, if not excelled, by M. Gaboriau. The same skill in constructing a story is shown by both, as likewise the same ability to build up a superstructure of facts on a foundation which, sound enough in appearance, is shattered when the long-concealed touchstone of truth is at length applied to it."—*Brighton Herald*.

THE GILDED CLIQUE.

"Full of incident, and instinct with life and action. Altogether this is a most fascinating book."—*Hampshire Advertiser*.

THE MYSTERY OF ORCIVAL.

"The Author keeps the interest of the reader at fever heat, and by a succession of unexpected turns and incidents, the drama is ultimately worked out to a very pleasant result. The ability displayed is unquestionable."—*Sheffield Independent*.

DOSSIER NO. 113.

"The plot is worked out with great skill, and from first to last the reader's interest is never allowed to flag."—*Dumbarton Herald*.

THE LITTLE OLD MAN OF BATIGNOLLES.

THE SLAVES OF PARIS. Two Vols.

"Sensational, full of interest, cleverly conceived, and wrought out with consummate skill."—*Oxford and Cambridge Journal*.

THE CATASTROPHE. Two Vols.

"A plot vigorously and skillfully constructed, leading through a series of surprising dramatic scenes and thrilling mysteries, and culminating in a sudden and complete exposure of crime and triumph of innocence. 'The Catastrophe' does ample credit to M. Gaboriau's reputation as a novelist of vast resource in incident and of wonderful ingenuity in constructing and unravelling thrilling mysteries."—*Aberdeen Journal*.

INTRIGUES OF A POISONER.

"The wonderful Sensational Novels of Emile Gaboriau."—*Globe*.

THE COUNT'S MILLIONS. Two Vols.

"To those who love the mysterious and the sensational, Gaboriau's stories are irresistibly fascinating. His marvellously clever pages hold the mirror up to nature with absolute fidelity; and the interest with which he contrives to invest his characters proves that exaggeration is unnecessary to a master."—*Society*.

THE OLD AGE OF LECOQ, THE DETECTIVE.

Two Vols.

"The romances of Gaboriau and Du Boisgobey picture the marvellous Lecoq and other wonders of shrewdness, who piece together the elaborate details of the most complicated crimes, as Professor Owen with the smallest bone as a foundation could reconstruct the most extraordinary animals."—*Standard*.

IN THE SERPENTS' COILS.

"This is a most picturesque, dramatic, and powerful sensational novel. Its interest never flags. Its terrific excitement continues to the end. The reader is kept spell-bound."—*Oldham Chronicle*.

THE DAY OF RECKONING. Two Vols.

"M. du Boisgobey gives us no tiresome descriptions or laboured analyses of character: under his facile pen plots full of incident are quickly opened and unwound. He does not stop to moralise; all his art consists in creating intricacies which shall keep the reader's curiosity on the stretch, and offer a full scope to his own really wonderful ingenuity for unravelling."—*Times*.

THE SEVERED HAND.

"The plot is a marvel of intricacy and cleverly managed surprises."—*Literary World*.
 "Readers who like a thoroughly entangled and thrilling plot will welcome this novel with avidity."—*Bristol Mercury*.

BERTHA'S SECRET.

"'Bertha's Secret' is a most effective romance. We need not say how the story ends, for this would spoil the reader's pleasure in a novel which depends for all its interest on the skilful weaving and unweaving of mysteries, but we will repeat that 'Bertha's Secret' is very well worth perusal."—*Times*.

WHO DIED LAST? OR THE RIGHTFUL HEIR.

"Travellers at this season of the year will find the time occupied by a long journey pass away as rapidly as they can deal with one of Du Boisgobey's absorbing volumes in their hand."—*London Figaro*.

THE CRIME OF THE OPERA HOUSE. Two Vols.

"We are led breathless from the first page to the last, and close the book with a thorough admiration for the vigorous romancist who has the courage to fulfil the true function of the story-teller, by making reflection subordinate to action."—*Aberdeen Journal*.

In double volumes, bound in scarlet cloth, price 2s. 6d. each.

NEW EDITIONS OF THE

GABORIAU AND DU BOISGOBEY SENSATIONAL NOVELS.

NOW READY.

- 1.—THE MYSTERY OF ORCIVAL, AND THE GILDED OLIQUE.
- 2.—THE LEROUGE CASE, AND OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY.
- 3.—LECOQ, THE DETECTIVE. 4.—THE SLAVES OF PARIS.
- 5.—IN PERIL OF HIS LIFE, AND INTRIGUES OF A POISONER.
- 6.—DOSSIER NO. 113, AND THE LITTLE OLD MAN OF BATIGNOLLES.
- 7.—THE COUNT'S MILLIONS.
- 8.—THE OLD AGE OF LECOQ, THE DETECTIVE.
- 9.—THE CATASTROPHE.
- 10.—THE DAY OF RECKONING.
- 11.—THE SEVERED HAND, AND IN THE SERPENTS' COILS.
- 12.—BERTHA'S SECRET, AND WHO DIED LAST?
- 13.—THE CRIME OF THE OPERA HOUSE.

In small post 8vo, ornamental covers, 1s. each; in cloth, 1s. 6d.

VIZETELLY'S POPULAR FRENCH NOVELS.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE BEST EXAMPLES OF RECENT FRENCH
FICTION OF AN UNOBJECTIONABLE CHARACTER.

"They are books that may be safely left lying about where the ladies of the family can pick them up and read them. The interest they create is happily not of the vicious sort at all."

SHEFFIELD INDEPENDENT.

FROMONT THE YOUNGER & RISLER THE ELDER. By A. DAUDET.

"The series starts well with M. Alphonse Daudet's masterpiece."—*Athenæum*.

"A terrible story, powerful after a sledge-hammer fashion in some parts, and wonderfully tender, touching, and pathetic in others, the extraordinary popularity whereof may be inferred from the fact that this English version is said to be translated from the fiftieth French edition."—*Illustrated London News*.

SAMUEL BROHL AND PARTNER. By V. CHERBULIEZ.

"M. Cherbuliez's novels are read by everybody and offend nobody. They are excellent studies of character, well constructed, peopled with interesting men and women, and the style in which they are written is admirable."—*The Times*.

"Those who have read this singular story in the original need not be reminded of that supremely dramatic study of the man who lived two lives at once, even within himself. The reader's discovery of his double nature is one of the most cleverly managed of surprises, and Samuel Brohl's final dissolution of partnership with himself is a remarkable stroke of almost pathetic comedy."—*The Graphic*.

THE DRAMA OF THE RUE DE LA PAIX. By A. BELOT.

"A highly ingenious plot is developed in 'The Drama of the Rue de la Paix,' in which a decidedly interesting and thrilling narrative is told with great force and passion, relieved by sprightliness and tenderness."—*Illustrated London News*.

MAUGARS JUNIOR. By A. THEURIET.

"One of the most charming novelettes we have read for a long time."—*Literary World*.

WAYWARD DOSIA, & THE GENEROUS DIPLOMATIST.

By HENRY GRÉVILLE.

"As epigrammatic as anything Lord Beaconsfield has ever written."—*Hampshire Telegraph*.**A NEW LEASE OF LIFE, & SAVING A DAUGHTER'S DOWRY.** By E. ABOUT."A New Lease of Life' is an absorbing story, the interest of which is kept up to the very end."—*Dublin Evening Mail*."The story, as a flight of brilliant and eccentric imagination, is unequalled in its peculiar way."—*The Graphic*.**COLOMBA, & CARMEN.** By P. MÉRIMÉE."The freshness and raciness of 'Colomba' is quite cheering after the stereotyped three-volume novels with which our circulating libraries are crammed."—*Halifax Times*."'Carmen' will be welcomed by the lovers of the sprightly and tuneful opera the heroine of which Minnie Hauk made so popular. It is a bright and vivacious story."—*Life*.**A WOMAN'S DIARY, & THE LITTLE COUNTESS.** By O. FEUILLET."Is wrought out with masterly skill, and affords reading which, although of a slightly sensational kind, cannot be said to be hurtful either mentally or morally."—*Dumbarton Herald*.**BLUE-EYED META HOLDENIS, & A STROKE OF DIPLOMACY.** By V. CHERBULIEZ."'Blue-eyed Meta Holdenis' is a delightful tale."—*Civil Service Gazette*."'A Stroke of Diplomacy' is a bright vivacious story pleasantly told."—*Hampshire Advertiser*.**THE GODSON OF A MARQUIS.** By A. THEURIET."The rustic personages, the rural scenery and life in the forest country of Argonne, are painted with the hand of a master. From the beginning to the close the interest of the story never flags."—*Life*.**THE TOWER OF PERCEMONT, AND MARIANNE.** By GEORGE SAND."George Sand has a great name, and the 'Tower of Perceмонт' is not unworthy of it."—*Illustrated London News*.**THE LOW-BORN LOVER'S REVENGE.** By V. CHERBULIEZ."'The Low-born Lover's Revenge' is one of M. Cherbuliez's many exquisitely written productions. The studies of human nature under various influences, especially in the cases of the unhappy heroine and her low-born lover, are wonderfully effective."—*Illustrated London News*.**THE NOTARY'S NOSE, AND OTHER AMUSING STORIES.**

By E. ABOUT.

"Crisp and bright, full of movement and interest."—*Brighton Herald*.**DOCTOR CLAUDE ; OR, LOVE RENDERED DESPERATE.**

By H. MALOT. Two Vols.

"We have to appeal to our very first flight of novelists to find anything so artistic in English romance as these books."—*Dublin Evening Mail*.**THE THREE RED KNIGHTS ; OR, THE BROTHERS' VENGEANCE.** By P. FÉVAL."The one thing that strikes us in these stories is the marvellous dramatic skill of the writers."—*Sheffield Independent*.

In demy 4to, handsomely printed and bound, with gilt edges, price 12s.

A HISTORY OF CHAMPAGNE; WITH NOTES ON THE OTHER SPARKLING WINES OF FRANCE.

By HENRY VIZETELLY.

CHEVALIER OF THE ORDER OF FRANZ-JOSEF.

WINE JUROR FOR GREAT BRITAIN AT THE VIENNA AND PARIS EXHIBITIONS OF 1873 AND 1878.

Illustrated with 350 Engravings,
FROM ORIGINAL SKETCHES AND PHOTOGRAPHS, ANCIENT MSS., EARLY PRINTED
BOOKS, RARE PRINTS, CARICATURES, ETC.

"Mr. Henry Vizetelly's handsome book about Champagne and other sparkling wines of France is full of curious information and amusement. It should be widely read and appreciated."
—*Saturday Review*.

MR. HENRY VIZETELLY'S POPULAR BOOKS ON WINE.

"Mr. Vizetelly discourses brightly and discriminatingly on crus and bouquets and the different European vineyards, most of which he has evidently visited."—*The Times*.

Price 1s. 6d. ornamental cover; or 2s. 6d. in elegant cloth binding.

FACTS ABOUT PORT AND MADEIRA,

GLEANED DURING A TOUR IN THE AUTUMN OF 1877.

By HENRY VIZETELLY.

WINE JUROR FOR GREAT BRITAIN AT THE VIENNA AND PARIS EXHIBITIONS OF 1873 AND 1878.

With 100 Illustrations from Original Sketches and Photographs.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Price 1s. 6d. ornamental cover; or 2s. 6d. in elegant cloth binding.

FACTS ABOUT CHAMPAGNE AND OTHER SPARKLING WINES,

COLLECTED DURING NUMEROUS VISITS TO THE CHAMPAGNE AND OTHER VITICULTURAL DISTRICTS
OF FRANCE AND THE PRINCIPAL REMAINING WINE-PRODUCING COUNTRIES OF EUROPE.

Illustrated with 112 Engravings from Sketches and Photographs.

Price 1s. ornamental cover; or 1s. 6d. cloth gilt.

FACTS ABOUT SHERRY,

GLEANED IN THE VINEYARDS AND BODEGAS OF THE JEREZ, & OTHER DISTRICTS.

Illustrated with numerous Engravings from Original Sketches.

Price 1s. in ornamental cover; or 1s. 6d. cloth gilt.

THE WINES OF THE WORLD.

CHARACTERIZED AND CLASSED.





Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 023 600 344

CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(650) 723-1493
grncirc@sulmail.stanford.edu
All books are subject to recall.

DATE DUE

--	--

